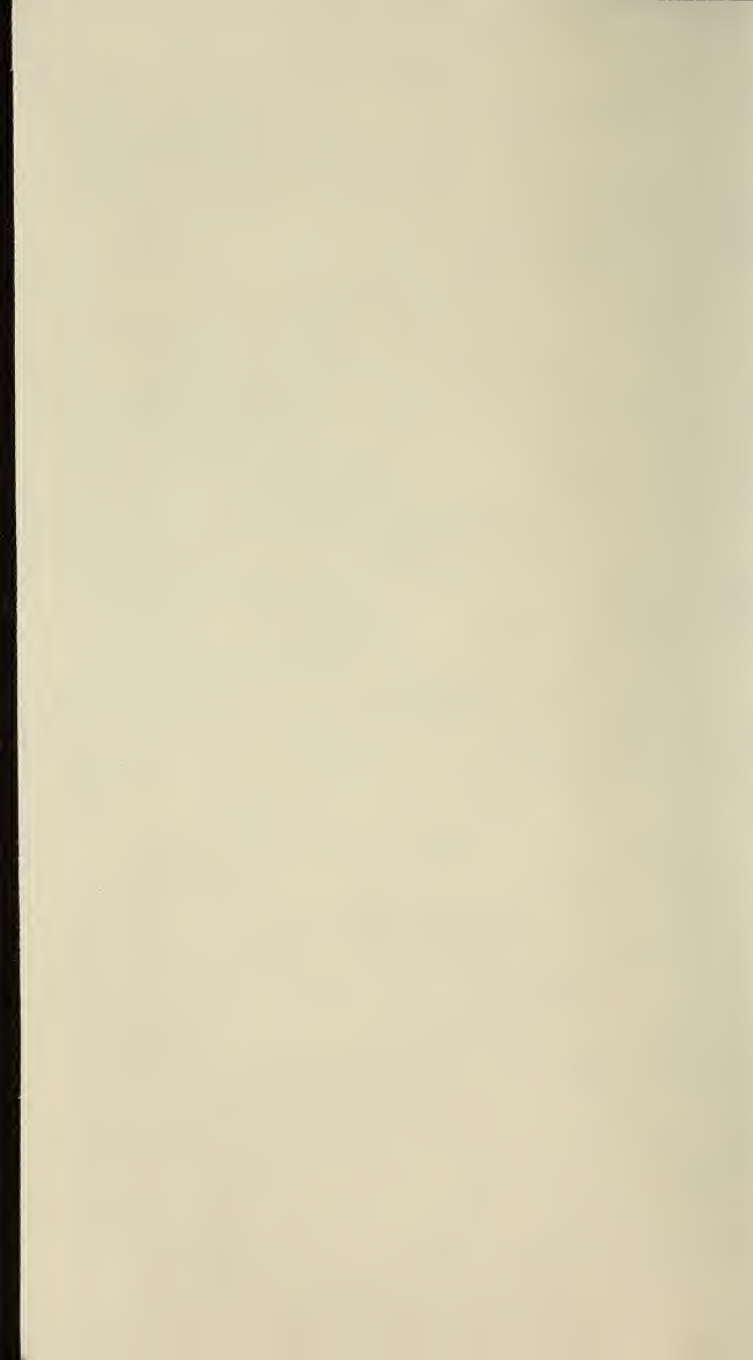


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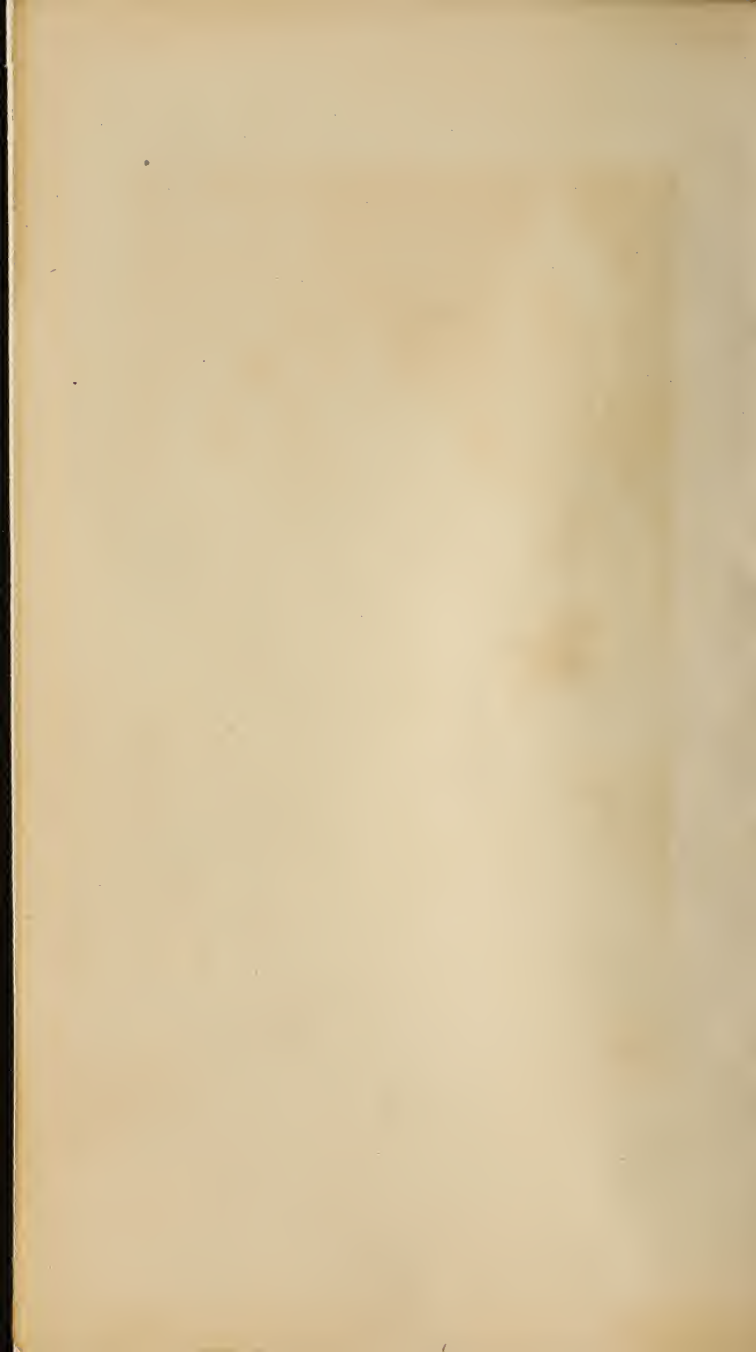
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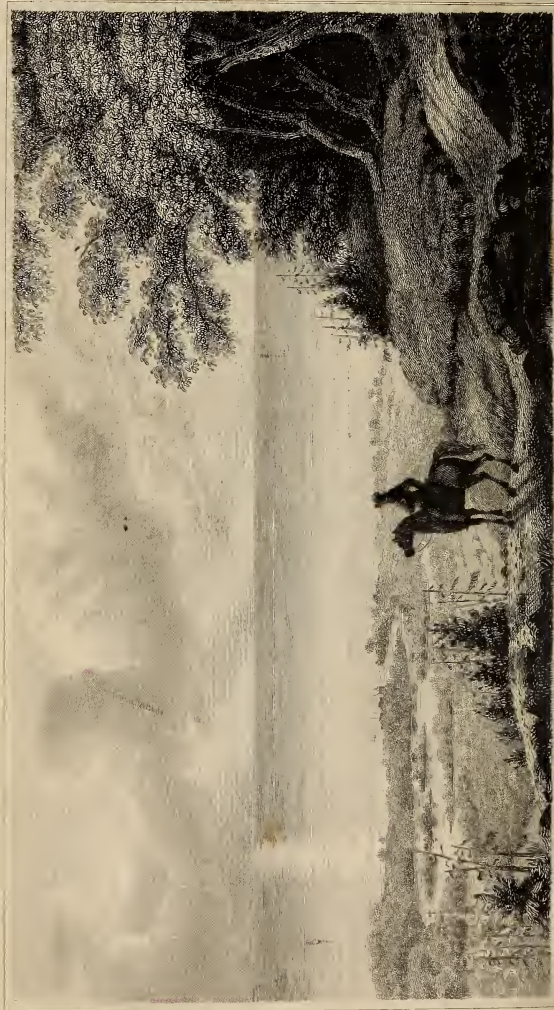
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SCENE IN THE MEETING OF THE TRAVELLERS.

P. 199.

Philadelphia, W. Marshall & Co.

Gathered
FRAGMENTS,

BY

Rev. John A. Clark.



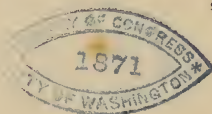
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GATHERED
FRAGMENTS.

BY REV. JOHN A. CLARK,

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA; AUTHOR OF "THE PASTOR'S
TESTIMONY," "A WALK ABOUT ZION," &c.



PHILADELPHIA :
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PREFACE.

THE design of this volume will be distinctly seen by those who are disposed to read the introductory chapter. It is entitled *GATHERED FRAGMENTS*, not because it consists of extracts, or unfinished pieces, but because there have been brought together in this volume a number of separate and independent narrative sketches. These sketches, as has just been intimated, have no necessary connexion with each other, though each one illustrates some great principle of Christianity, and constitutes a complete narrative by itself.

Three or four of these sketches have been previously published in a less permanent form, among which are, "*The M'Ellen Family*," "*The Baptism*," "*The Family in Eternity*," and "*The Meeting of the Travellers*." These pieces, however, as they appear in the present volume, have all been revised, enlarged, and altered. The larger part of the volume consists of sketches never before published.

"*The M'Ellen Family*," "*The Meeting of the Travellers*," and one or two other narratives in this volume, will probably appear to some readers to wear somewhat of a denominational phase, though we trust they will appear to none to be imbued with a sectarian spirit. The object which the Author has proposed to

himself is the spiritual improvement of fallen, blighted, sinful mind, which meets the eye in dense masses on every side. He hopes that this volume may be the means of guiding some strayed and erring soul to the foot of the cross—or of inspiring some faint or faltering believer to run with increased vigour “the race set before him.” He desires now prayerfully to commit this work into the hands of God, that he may bid it go abroad on an errand of mercy, or sleep in obscurity, just as he in his infinite wisdom shall see best for his own glory. Whatever shall be the issue, the Author can never fail to rejoice THAT THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH,—YEA, AND THAT HE ORDERETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL.

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GATHERED FRAGMENTS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

It is delightful to gather the lessons of moral duty from the silent, but expressive operations of the Divine Being. It is recorded in more than one instance in the sacred volume, as the marked and peculiar sin of intelligent and rational creatures, that *they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.** This contemplation of the divine conduct, which is thus taught to be the duty of every human creature, is to extend, not only to the moral acts of God, but to his operations in the natural world. In this remark we refer not so much to those traces of divine workmanship, and those indications of divine power which are seen alike in the painted pebble and the delicately pencilled flower, in the tremendous volcano and the quiet corn-field, “in the wild winter storm and in the soft summer moonlight,” as to those fixed and general principles of divine operation that extend through a whole system.

The idea intended to be communicated is this—that it is our duty to consider not only how Jehovah governs men and angels, how he treats the sinning and the unsinning ; but how he governs the material universe—what appears to be the principle of divine administration in the natural government of matter and of mind. By such contemplation, we can often deduce inferences of high moral bearing, in relation to the regulation of human conduct. This idea I will endeavour to illustrate.

* Isa. v. 12. Ps. xxviii. 5. Job xxxiv. 26, 27.

The divine administration.

The globe on which we live, with all its varied furniture and appendages, with all its multiplied forms of organic and animated being, and with all its complex arrangements for the support of animal life, is, as a physical or material system, under the government of God. Every particle of matter is under his immediate and absolute control. There can be no such thing as chance within the sphere of such an administration. The heavenly minded Cowper has truly remarked—

..... Could chance
Find place in his dominion, or dispose
One lawless particle to thwart his plan,
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.

All the changes that occur take place according to fixed principles of divine administration. One of those principles is, that in this mundane system nothing shall be lost or struck out of being. Not a single particle of matter that existed at the original creation of this earth is now missing. Every atom, that is not at present in use, is carefully preserved in the great laboratory of nature, and is destined to enter into new aggregations or organized forms.

It is undoubtedly true, that every thing around us is the subject of constant mutation. “Matter under every visible form and modification, when regarded in its general mass, is perpetually changing; alternately living, dying, and reviving; decomposing into elements that elude our pursuit; and recombining into new shapes, and energies, and modes of existence. The purest and most compact metals become tarnished, or converted into a calx or oxyde on its surface, and the most durable and crystallized rocks crumble into granules; and the matter constituting these oxydes and granules, by an additional series of operations, is still farther decomposed, till every vestige of their late character is lost, and the elementary principles of which they consisted are appropriated to other purposes, and spring to view under other forms and faculties. The same process takes

Nothing in nature lost.

place in the organized world. The germ becomes a seed, the seed a sapling, the sapling a tree; the embryo becomes an infant, the infant a youth, the youth a man; and having thus ascended the scale of maturity, both, in like manner, begin the downward path to decay; and so far as relates to the visible materials of which they consist, both at length moulder into one common elementary mass, and furnish fresh fuel for fresh generations of animal or vegetable existence; so that all is in motion, all is striving to burst the bonds of its present state; not an atom is idle; and the frugal economy of nature makes one set of materials answer the purposes of many, and moulds it into every diversified figure of being, and beauty, and happiness.”*

Thus we see, that while decomposition is continually going on in the material world around us, and that there is a ceaseless tendency in all bodies to be resolved into their original elementary principles, yet the moment this process arrives at a certain point, dissolution is arrested, and the elementary principles of these bodies are held safe in the great laboratory of nature, till they are needed, and taken up in some new combinations. And hence we learn, that the entire principle of GATHERING UP THE FRAGMENTS, THAT NOTHING MAY BE LOST, enters as an essential element into the divine administration, as it respects the physical world around us. And this will appear the more striking and remarkable when we consider the fact, that this course of divine procedure is not attributable to any difficulty that stands in the way of calling new matter into existence. The Divine Being could, with a single volition, call into existence, an amount of matter not only adequate to every exigence, but a mass equal to that which now constitutes the whole extended immense material universe. And yet He uses matter with such frugality that not a particle has been lost since the creation of the world. Is not this fact worthy of contemplation? Does it not read a lesson of moral instruction to every human creature? The words of

* Good's Book of Nature, vol. i. p. 19.

There should be no waste of intellectual energy.

the divine Jesus, as he stood amid the fed thousands, that sat on the verdant grass, in a field near Bethsaida, **GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN, THAT NOTHING BE LOST,** were but a moral exposition or beautiful comment upon one of the great laws of nature. And I would here add, that if the divine conduct be placed before us for our imitation, if we regard it as obligatory upon us to copy the divine example, as far as it is imitable, then shall we not be brought to the conclusion, that it is the bounden duty of every moral and intelligent being to strive to be engaged in labours that in their results will be endlessly useful ?

The practical inference to be deduced from the fact which we have been contemplating is, that every human creature is bound not only to use all the objects of external possession, in such a way that nothing will be lost, but so to consecrate all the powers and faculties of his mind to the cause of truth and holiness that, during the whole period of his earthly existence, there shall be no waste of intellectual energy. This is undoubtedly the will of God. But alas ! how wide from this have earth's inhabitants usually acted ! One judiciously remarks,—“The experiment has never yet been fairly made, to see how much pure and ever-burning piety might accomplish, in calling forth the active powers of man. What mighty energies ambition and sin might summon into being, has been exemplified ; and, unhappily, when we wish to gauge the powers of man, we are compelled to resort to some such melancholy exemplifications. History is little else than the record of such disastrous achievements ; in contemplating which, we stand almost equally amazed at the exhibition of gigantic intellect and fiendish malignity. Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon have amazed the world with their daring exploits, and by the mighty powers which they exhibited in the service of ambition ; Nero, Cæsar, Borgia, Richard III. have shown to what prodigious efforts unmingled sin may summon the human powers ; and D'Alembert, Diderot, and Voltaire have evinced to what almost supernatural feats of intellectual strength the mind may be

The power of human intellect.

summoned, in a united effort to corrupt a nation, and dethrone religion from the hearts of men. Here, talent has been controlled by sin; ambition or crime directs all the powers on a single object, and the world trembles before the amazing intellect of fallen man.

“But when we contemplate the influence of holiness upon the human mind, we see it in broken, irregular, and disjointed efforts. Among men, merely, we cannot point to a single instance, where the powers have been as entirely controlled and called forth by holy efforts, as they have been under the control of ambition or infidelity. A few, indeed, have approximated to it; and we refer to them as rare exceptions to the common laws of holiness over men. The energies of Paul were brought into action under the influence of piety; and Baxter and Edwards seemed disposed to make trial of what that mind could do, under the operation of Christianity: and Howard is said to have pursued his object with an intensity which the nature of the human mind forbade to be greater. But why do we refer to these instances, as standing, like far distant lights in the darkness of the past? It is because the power of holiness has not been applied to the *mass* of the Christian world.

“There are two melancholy facts which stand forth in the past history of the world. One is, that talent which might have made itself felt in shaping the destiny of men, has slumbered and been lost. At any single period of the world, there has been talent enough for all its great purposes of improvement. Who can believe that Luther was the only man who dwelt in a cloister, endowed with native powers to effect a revolution in nations? Who can believe that there is not power enough in the church to carry the gospel to all the world? The other fact is, that genius is often wasted, or burns and blazes for naught. Now, splendid talent is called forth by some daring scheme of ambition. Smitten and foiled in its designs, it shrinks back on itself, and withers, and is lost to the world. Now, it is excited by some wild Utopian plan for the philosophic improvement of men. Life is exhausted in the scheme, and the misdi-

The influence of holiness.

rected talent falls useless to the dust. Now, splendid genius seems to be drawn out simply by the love of intellectual exercise—by the mere fondness of its play; and a useless poem or novel is all the memorial which is left to tell, that the man once lived. And yet again, talent, just adapted to all the hardy enterprises of making the race better, expends itself in some wild and devious plan of wandering, like that of Ledyard; or in exploring the memorial of ancient folly, like that of Belzoni.

“Now, the same mighty energies of mind, which are summoned into action by ambition, the love of gold, and of sin; or the very energy, that seeks employment adapted to its nature, in traversing continents, ascending streams, and penetrating frozen seas, might be called forth by the same principle which moved the minds of Paul, and Buchanan, and Martyn. Nay, higher powers of mind might be developed by an inextinguishable desire to be holy, and to save the world, than the love of gold or fame has ever yet excited. If a man wished to make the most of his talents, to put them to the severest and most enduring test, to labour simply to extend and prolong his influence, he would tread the path of Paul and Howard. The influence of the Cæsars of the world must die.”* The influence of Paul and Howard can never die. The results of their toils will exist throughout the ages of millennial glory, will endure to the end of all things—yea, will last as long as the wasteless ages of eternity.

When the mind is led into a train of thought like this,—and, when viewing the tremendous responsibility that rests upon us, as redeemed and divinely enlightened beings, we see, in looking back upon the past, how little we have ever accomplished for the cause of truth and holiness,—how much of our time has been frittered away, and can never be recalled,—how much of our strength has been wasted for which we have now nothing to show,—who that loves the Saviour, and realizes that he must soon stand at the

* Christian Spectator, vol. vi. pp. 552—554.

judgment bar, will not feel an irrepressible desire, not only to consecrate all his future labours to the glory of God, and to the promotion of truth and holiness, but will not look around with deep solicitude, and see if some of the results of his past efforts may not be gathered up and devoted to the same cause?

It was a feeling not unlike this that first suggested to the author the idea of the present volume. He believes that every Christian minister is bound, by the most solemn obligations, to consecrate his time, and talents, and influence to the cause of the great Redeemer, and to seek to bring mind in contact with divine truth, by every means in his power, whether by the pulpit or the press.

With the solemn conviction resting upon his mind, that *the time is short*,—that as yet, little has been done, and that it is in accordance with the divine will *that nothing should be lost*,—he has ventured to bring together the fragments that compose this volume, and lay them as a free-will offering on the altar of God, asking him, who not unfrequently “*chooses the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty, and base things, and things which are despised*,” to accomplish his great and glorious purposes, to bless this effort, and make it tributary to his glory.

The only object which the author has proposed to himself in this volume, is the everlasting good of undying souls. The thought frequently presses upon him, that he is floating down the rapid current of time, in company with nearly nine hundred millions of immortal beings,—that he and they will soon be in the ocean of eternity,—that only a very small number, a mere fraction of these millions, have yet laid hold on eternal life,—and that now is the only time in which they can be reached or rescued. As this thought has come up before him again and again, he has been driven back to the conclusion, ‘Wo is me, if I do not seek, by every means in my power, to bring the truth of God in contact with undying minds.’

The author has been encouraged to hope that the present volume may exert a salutary influence from two considerations.

The first is, that the method here pursued in the inculcation of truth, has for its model and sanction the record of divine truth. A large portion of the Bible is of a narrative character. A large proportion of the materials that make up that volume consists of a history of God's people, and of his various dealings with them. There is no doubt that the truth contained in the sacred volume, from this very circumstance, has produced infinitely more effect, than it would have done had the same truth been communicated in a more didactic or philosophic manner. Facts have been remembered, and have made an impression, where abstract principles would never have reached the mind, nor left a single lodgement of truth in the heart.

The other consideration adverted to is this—that God has blessed, in an eminent manner, true narratives of a work of grace in the heart. It seems to be a manifest principle in the economy of grace, that every display of divine power put forth in the conversion and sanctification of sinners shall have a moral influence upon those who witness it or hear of it. How often has an extended revival taken its rise from one striking case of conversion in a congregation! How many minds have been awakened, comforted, and refreshed, by reading what God has done for others! God certainly has a purpose in all this. An inspired apostle could say, "*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*"

In illustration of the idea just expressed, that in the economy of grace, God designs that every display of divine power manifested in the conversion and sanctification of sinners, shall exert a moral influence upon other minds, I will state the following incident.

Many years since, there lived in a sweet and beautiful

An incident.

town in New England, a zealous and devoted clergyman whose labours were remarkably blessed. The words spoken by him seemed "like fire, or as the hammer to the rock." The young, in whole companies, left the scenes of gayety, and gathered around the cross of Christ. Many an aged sinner, who had been slumbering for years in unregeneracy, was aroused from the deep sleep of spiritual death, and led to cry out—*Lord, save, or I perish!*

There was one individual, however, whom his preaching did not in the least affect. Though this herald of the cross lifted up his voice like a trumpet, and spared not, though he proclaimed the whole counsel of God, and brought the solemn truths of religion before his hearers with a power almost sufficient to wake up the dead, Mr. A—— sat as unmoved and unconcerned as though he had *letters patent* from Jehovah, assuring him that his name was written in the book of life. He did not profess to be a religious man. He was, however, irreproachable in his moral conduct, and often declared that he had a great respect for religion. But, in truth, Mr. A—— was very far from being a believer. He had no just conception of the spirituality of the gospel, and was rather disposed to sneer at the idea of an inward work of grace in the heart.

When, therefore, he saw one and another of his acquaintance under the influence of this faithful ministry coming forward to enlist under the banner of Christ, he said to himself, "This is all hypocrisy or delusion." The holy spectacle of awakened sinners coming forward to give themselves up to the Lord Jesus Christ, in the bonds of the everlasting covenant, he could not behold but with feelings of contempt. He was cherishing, in all its unsubdued power, that "carnal mind which is enmity against God." Still he flattered himself that he was a very good man. He continued to attend upon the services of the sanctuary. One afternoon, to his great surprise, he saw Mr. J. J. rise up, and go forward to the baptismal font. This individual was a person of great influence in that community. He

Influence of example.

was known to be a man of calm, and cool, and deliberate judgment. He had on several occasions shown himself the particular friend of Mr. A——. And now he stood before an assembled congregation, to enter into covenant with God—to enlist under the banner of Christ—to be signed with the sign of the cross—and to give himself up unreservedly to the service of that Redeemer, who had bought him with his blood. *There*, as he stood at the foot of the cross, there went forth a silent and powerful testimony in favour of religion. His own heart was touched with deep feeling. The big tear rolled down his cheek, as, with half choked utterance, he solemnly took upon him the vows of the covenant. Mr. A—— looked at this sight with amazement.

He said to himself,—

“ I know this man. He has too much integrity to play the part of a hypocrite. His feelings are too equable, and his mind too well balanced, to be brought under a fanatical influence. What does this mean ? ”

Mr. A—— went home, but the scene he had witnessed followed him there. He began to feel a sort of indignation towards Mr. J. J. that he had suffered himself to be influenced to take this step. Upon a second thought he knew that Mr. J. J. was not the man to be influenced by others. The more he reasoned upon this subject, the more perplexed and dissatisfied he felt. A ray of the Spirit's light soon broke in upon his soul. He began to see that his own mind was dark. He began to suspect that all was not right within. He went into a room by himself, and tried to pray ; but found he could not. He then took down the Bible, and tried to read it ; but he could not. He felt as though there was an influence upon him, hurrying him on to commit some dreadful deed. While he was there alone with himself and God, the broad blaze of divine truth flashed upon his view, and revealed to him the cause of his misery. He saw it now, as with the clearness of noon-day, that he was, to use his own words, “ *an accursed*

How God works in the economy of grace.

sinner before God." He lay all that night in agony. For days he went bowed down with distress, seeking rest and finding none. At length a ray of comfort dawned upon his darkened soul. He became a converted man, and took the same stand that Mr. J. J. had done, in testifying his allegiance to Christ.

Here we see that the silent witnessing of a work of grace accomplished what the most powerful preaching could not. And this is not all. Mr. A——, having been brought to feel the power of inward religion, and to know in some degree the preciousness of Christ, felt deeply anxious to extend the blessing to others. Among the efforts that he put forth to accomplish this object, was the instruction of a class of coloured adults. The Lord blessed his labours. One of the class became decidedly changed. She resided in a very gay and thoughtless family. Her altered conduct and consistent Christian deportment arrested the attention of a young lady, an inmate of the family, who before this had been one of the most thoughtless among the pleasure-taking tribe. But now her gayety was all gone. Daily did she bow before the mercy-seat, pleading for the transforming power of divine grace. Her prayer was heard. She became a devoted Christian. She said nothing to the family in which she resided, but her silent example pleaded most eloquently. The heads of that family became impressed. They resolved to seek the Lord—they were soon able to bear testimony, that he had not said, "*Seek ye my face in vain.*" That family became enrolled with "the sacramental host of God's elect," and were among the most active and zealous to promote the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

Now let us look back, and see how God works. The truth which awakened Mr. J. J. was heard by all these individuals, but it did not move one of their hearts, except his. And yet when it came to be known that he was a trophy of God's converting power, when he stood before the world to confess Christ, the fact planted an arrow of

The Holy Spirit the agent in man's conversion.

conviction in the flinty bosom of Mr. A——. This resulted in his conversion. In carrying out the principles of the gospel into action, Mr. A—— became the instrument of bringing salvation to an African woman. The change wrought in her arrested one of the daughters of gayety in her career of folly, and led her to consecrate herself to Christ. And this happy change spoke forth such a volume of argument, in the midst of a gay family, that all that family were brought under the abiding power of godliness. This was not the result of accident. It furnishes a specimen of the mode in which the great purposes of grace are carried on. It is in this way that God makes every thing he does in the kingdom of grace, tributary to the accomplishment of other and future achievements of mercy. Hence we see the striking analogy there exists between the economy of nature and of grace, especially in this great principle of *gathering up the fragments, that nothing be lost*. While it is a well attested fact, that “The Dairyman’s Daughter,” “The Young Cottager,” and works of this stamp, have been instrumental in bringing more souls to Christ, than the most elaborate treatises and powerful argumentation on the truth and doctrines of Christianity; it is also true that those narratives do not derive their principal moral power from any enchantment thrown around them by the hand of Legh Richmond, but from the simple fact, that they unfold in a plain and perspicuous manner the workings of divine grace upon the soul.

It will not be inferred from the preceding train of remarks, that the idea is cherished, that a single instance of conversion ever occurred without the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. Neither must the inference be deduced, that we suppose that any soul was ever “brought from darkness to light,” independently of the instrumentality of truth. We believe that the Spirit operates in all cases, in quickening the dead soul into life, by means of the truth. The character of God, the obligations of his law, and the means of rescue, must be before the mind. But the truth

The young convert that was not ashamed of Christ.

may be before the mind without being efficacious, and the very means which the Holy Spirit will employ to give it efficacy, may be the witnessing or the contemplation of "*what God hath wrought.*"

An intelligent, but reckless young man, in the circle of my acquaintance, some few years since, became a decided Christian. A short time after this change occurred, one of his former gay companions, with whom he had spent many a night of dissipation, met him, and jocosely remarked,

"Well, Mat D——, they tell me you have turned Christian—how is it?"

M— replied, with undisturbed tranquillity and solemn emphasis, "I hope that through the mercy of God I have been brought to a knowledge of the truth."

"Tell me," responded his friend, in rather a sneering tone, "what this means. Why have you been acting so ridiculously?"

"Come to my house to-morrow at such an hour," he replied, "and I will tell you."

This was agreed upon, and at the appointed hour the young man called. M— received him with his usual affectionate manner, but the moment they were by themselves, fixing his eyes upon him, with bursting emotion, he said—

"My dear sir, I believe all the change that is wrought in me has been effected by the power of God. Now, before I attempt to tell you what he has done for me, I wish you to allow me to kneel down, and pray that he may change your heart." This proposition was so unexpected, that had a thunderbolt fallen at that young man's feet at that moment he could not have been more astonished. He started back as though amazed, and made no reply.

M— however showed him that he was acting upon solemn convictions of duty, for he immediately fell upon his knees, and poured out such a fervent strain of supplication, that when he rose, this young scoffer's eyes were filled with tears. From that moment he became thoughtful, and in a few months he stood enrolled with the pro-

Hopes cherished in relation to this volume.

fessed people of God. He has ever since maintained a consistent character for piety. In adverting to his first serious impressions, he has often mentioned the above incident, accompanying it with the remark,

“ When I heard Mat D—— pray, I felt that there was a divine reality in religion.”

Now *the Holy Spirit* was the grand agent in this work—the *truth*, which had long been before that impenitent mind, was the instrument that brought conviction to the soul, but the *proximate cause* which the Spirit employed, to give divine efficacy to the truth, was, the manifestation of God’s transforming grace in the case of M—.

The hope is cherished, that the pieces which compose this volume, founded, as they are, upon incidents gathered from real life, will not be without some use.

So far as they are illustrative of the great principles of the gospel—of the power of transforming grace—of the influence of godliness in sustaining the believer under trials and conflicts—of the joys that are experienced by the renewed soul—and of the sweet aspirations of faith and hope, under the bright beamings of God’s glorious and reconciled countenance, the tendency of these pieces, it is believed, will be to commend the gospel, to endear to the reader the cross of Christ, and constrain him to feel, with increasing conviction, the importance of practical and heart-felt religion. If the exhibitions of truth contained in this volume shall either remotely or directly contribute to the rescue of one undying spirit from the iron fetters of sin, and the pangs of the second death, there will be a witness at the right hand of God to attest through all eternity, that the leisure moments were not spent in vain, that were devoted to this volume of GATHERED FRAGMENTS. Reader, if thy name is not in the book of life—if thou hast not yet submitted thy heart to God, may these pages prevail upon thee to be *that witness*, and to take thy stand among the blood-washed throng that surround the throne of God and the Lamb.

THE
M'ELLEN FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

THE PIOUS MOTHER.

"These I distinctly hold in memory still.
Nor strange, that recollection there should dwell,
Where first I preach'd the reconciling word.

POLLOK.

THERE are some passages written down upon the page of memory that we love to read again and again. It is not impossible that even in heaven we may retain this feeling; and that our devotions even there may be enlivened by the reminiscences of earth. It is quite within the range of possibility, that even in the eternal world, and amid the bright fields of celestial glory, the recollections of time will wake the harps of the redeemed to louder notes of praise. In reference to one event, we know it will be so. *That event* constitutes the burden of the new song, which will be for ever sung, and for ever new. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." Certainly, *during our earthly pilgrimage*, it is profitable to recall and meditate upon some scenes and events that are past—scenes and events which are calculated to lift up the soul in loftier adoration to God—to render more pre-

The scope of this narrative.

cious, and endeared to our hearts the glorious Saviour, and to urge us onward with a livelier zeal, and a holier earnestness, in "*the race set before us.*"

The following sketch, it is hoped, will partake in some degree of this character. The facts here recorded tend incidentally to illustrate the advantages of one of the arrangements connected with a branch of the Christian church. They, however, have a higher bearing than this. They show the value of family religion, evince the power of a well-founded hope in Christ, and are so many new attestations to the truth of God's promises. It is therefore the sincere and ardent prayer of the writer, that this little narrative may not only hold up to the view of all Christians the spirituality and excellency of the liturgy of the church which he loves, but may contribute in some small degree to advance the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and hasten on that happy period, when "*the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*"

It was during the summer of 1826, in the lovely month of June, that I was first led to visit the spot with which the scenes of the present narrative are associated. I was then acting as a missionary in a large county, where, previous to my occupancy of the field, there was not a single organized Episcopal congregation, with the exception of the one to which the M'Ellen family were attached. *That* had been organized a short time before I entered upon this field, and constituted one of the stations where I held regular and stated service.

I had just commenced my ministry. Perhaps there was connected with my feelings some of the ardour and unwarranted expectation of young Melancthon. If so, I trust like him the error in my mind arose from the belief, that the love of Christ which had subdued my soul, would master the most stubborn heart and bring it into sweet subjection to the divine will. To preach the reconciling

word, appeared to me more delightful and glorious than any employment this side of heaven.

At the close of a service, held in the little and newly gathered parish, with which the M'Ellen family were connected, Mr. Robert M'Ellen came to me and said,—

“You will greatly oblige me, if you will consent to preach this evening at five o'clock, at my house, about three miles distant.”

“Most cheerfully will I do it,” was the reply.

“The special reason why I make this request,” he remarked, “is, that I have an aged mother, who on account of her feeble and infirm health, and the distance we live from here, is unable to enjoy the privileges of the sanctuary. She is now,” he added, “nearly eighty years old, but still retains her mental faculties vigorous and unimpaired.”

It was in complying with this request of Mr. M'Ellen, that I witnessed one of the most interesting and affecting scenes, that ever came within my knowledge. Many years have since elapsed—trials and sorrows have met me in my journey—great mercies have been strown around my path—life wears a different aspect before me now from what it then did; yet this scene lives fresh and vivid in my memory, as though it were but yesterday that I witnessed it. I must not, however, proceed to the delineation, until I have acquainted the reader with the previous history of this family of the M'Ellens.

Joseph M'Ellen was born in one of the Atlantic States, and reared up under a strict religious discipline. At the very outset in life, he bore a high character for integrity and manly virtue. He also, as it is believed, became early a subject of God's transforming grace. He had for many years been attached to a young lovely girl, nearly of his own age. The desire of his heart was now gratified in the possession of Elizabeth Munson, as his own wedded wife. They were both the children of farmers, and they expected to spend their days in agricultural pursuits.

Emigration to the west.

Their means however were slender, and the unsettled lands of the west presented many attractions. They determined to emigrate. They soon carried their resolution into effect, and found themselves in a new country, where they had to encounter many hardships, and submit to many privations. This, however, they did cheerfully, as they were living in the hope of seeing better days. To Joseph M^cEllen these hopes were never realized on earth. A few years only had elapsed, and he fell a victim to one of those fevers to which all new countries are subject. His two eldest sons, Robert and Joseph, could hardly be said, at this time, to have entered upon manhood. Upon them, however, devolved the business of paying for their land, and clearing away the thick forest that covered it. In this they were aided not a little by the counsel of their mother, *Elizabeth M^cEllen*. She was ever solicitous to form her children to habits of industry, but far more anxious to form their minds to habits of piety.

As I have before intimated, Mr. M^cEllen had consecrated himself to the Lord in early life; and she who had long shared his affections, was not a stranger to the cross of Christ. In this they were happily united. They both loved the Saviour, and they were both warmly attached to the Episcopal church. This was the church of their *choice*. Educated in the bosom of another denomination of Christians, they had attached themselves to this, from a conviction of the soundness of its doctrines, the apostolic character of its ministry, and the spirituality of its liturgy.

In leaving the place of their nativity, and taking up their abode in a new and thinly settled country, they were necessarily deprived of a privilege which the Episcopalian esteems the greatest of all earthly privileges, *the services of his own church*. They did not so feel this privation, until they had arrived at their log-house, and the blessed day of rest found them in the midst of a dense forest. On the morning of the first Sabbath after having taken possession of their new residence, when according to their former

Worship in a log room.

custom, every member of the family appeared in clean and comely apparel, the greatness of this privation began to be felt.

"I fear," said Mrs. M'Ellen, "in taking the step we have, we have not fully estimated the loss of privileges that we shall sustain. How are we to spend our Sundays?" "Of that I have thought much," said Mr. M'Ellen, "and in my reflections upon this subject, I have discovered an additional reason for increased attachment to the Episcopal church. We have our Prayer Books with us; we can therefore always have the regular service of the church, and on Sundays we will turn our little log-room into a chapel."

This proposition was immediately put into execution, and the service was invariably and uniformly read on Sundays, and all the children taught to join and take their several parts in it, until the sickness and death of Mr. M'Ellen. A most interesting scene was witnessed the next Sunday after the death of this worthy man, who like the patriarch of old had been to his family both a father and a priest.

I can in no way give you a better idea of it, than by repeating the narration which I received from Robert M'Ellen, who was one of the actors in this scene. This interesting narration was as follows.

"The children were all neatly clad and seated around the room with their Prayer Books. Every thing appeared as it used to, when my father was alive. The little cherry stand stood where it always had, on a Sunday morning. Upon it were laid the large Bible and Prayer Book. My mother had been absent for some half an hour, and, as I supposed, was attending to some necessary domestic concerns. I sat wondering who would fill my father's place. At length my mother entered the room, and, covered with weeds of mourning, proceeded to the little stand and knelt down before it. We were all silent. In a few minutes she arose. There was a slight flush upon her cheek, a

The mother conducting the worship of her family.

tear stood in her eye, and her lips quivered with emotion. With a tremulous voice she thus began: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.' We all instantly arose, and through the service made the proper responses, with which we were all familiar. My mother continued to read the service with perfect self-control until she came to the prayer, '*for persons under affliction:*' then her voice faltered and her utterance was choked. This was a trying moment to me.—My beloved father was no more. His death was fresh in my recollection. The voices of my little brothers and sisters uttering the responses, were still sounding in my ear. My mother was at this moment kneeling before the throne of God, and borne down by such a load of wounded feeling that she could not speak. All this was too much for me. It roused within me a flood of sensibility that I could not control. I wept, I sobbed aloud, I looked about with a wild and feverish gaze. All in the room were on their knees—all were silent, except myself. The tears were indeed trickling down from all the young eyes around me; but they fell like the dew-drops of evening, in silence. At length my mother proceeded, 'Remember these children, O Lord, in mercy; sanctify thy fatherly correction to them, endue their souls with patience under their affliction, and with resignation to thy blessed will—comfort them with a sense of thy goodness—lift up thy countenance upon them, and give them *peace* through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

"I felt that I wanted peace, but at this time I knew little about '*that peace which the world cannot give.*'

"After the conclusion of the service, my mother appeared perfectly calm and unagitated. She even seemed happy. This was not the case with me. The burden of feeling which had pressed me down continued to rest upon me with all its undiminished weight.

"I scarcely knew what hand had inflicted this wound

upon my heart. But I knew that I wanted comfort ; and as I had seen my mother derive a peace of mind from the devotions of the Prayer Book, I betook myself to the use and examination of it in secret. In the use of all its prayers, I found that I had to address myself to God in the acknowledged character of a *sinner*. I began to feel the truth of this designation. I began to discover that the mysterious burden under which I was labouring was the burden of unforgiven sin. As soon as I had made this discovery, I anxiously looked around to find some way by which I could remove this burden. Here again I had recourse to my Prayer Book. It told me I never could remove that burden, but Jesus Christ must take it off. I went to the Bible, and that told me the same thing.

“My mind during the two following weeks underwent various exercises. I had revealed my feelings to no one. My mother continued to read the service on Sunday, and to assemble us for family prayer every night and morning. It was during morning prayer on the third Sunday after my father's death, when in the Litany, my mother uttered this invocation, ‘O Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world,’ that in repeating the response ‘*Grant us thy peace,*’ I first felt the meaning of this petition ; and as I uttered it, I felt a peace, more than earthly, gently stealing over my soul. And when the same maternal voice repeated the invocation, ‘O Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world,’ my heart was filled with gratitude, and my eyes with tears, as I joined the response, ‘*Have mercy upon us.*’

“I continued to conceal my feelings. Still I was conscious that I was changed. My heart was filled with divine love. As I walked into the field I could see the goodness of God inscribed upon every plant and flower. These were discoveries that never before arrested my attention. My Bible began to appear more and more precious to me, and I was constantly longing for the return of the hallowed day of rest.

“ One evening as I sat reading to my mother, all the family at this time being out of the room, when I came to this passage, ‘ Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature,’ I stopped, and asked her how she understood this passage? My parents had often explained to me the meaning of various parts of Scripture, but I had never before presumed to solicit an exposition, and upon a moment’s reflection I felt almost astonished at myself for having done so at this time. Nothing, however, could have more delighted my mother. She immediately gave me a clear and succinct account of the *fall* and *depravity* of our race, the *atonement of Christ*, the *agency of the Spirit*, and the *new creation* effected by that agency. She then described the views, feelings, and affections of a man while in a state of nature, and compared them with the views, feelings, and affections of that same man after having been renewed by divine grace.

“ My attention was riveted, and my heart filled with trepidation. She had described my case exactly. I had disclosed my feelings to no one, yet she had delineated them with the utmost precision. She concluded her remarks by saying, ‘ No one, unless he is in Christ, and therefore a new creature, can expect to be saved. It was this, the hope gathered from *the blood of sprinkling*, that sustained and comforted your father in his last agony.’

“ ‘ My mother,’ said I, ‘ I believe I am in Christ Jesus, for I am conscious that I am a new creature.’ I then related to her the history of my exercises, and told her how the prayers of the service, and her reading of them, had by the blessing of God been made the instrument both of my conviction and of my conversion.

“ Never shall I forget the delight of this moment. My mother threw her arms around me, and exclaimed, ‘ Robert, when I first pressed thy infant form, my first-born child, to my heart, my bosom thrilled with ecstasy; but the delight I then felt was nothing compared with that I feel in hold-

Reluctance in speaking to friends on personal religion.

ing thee in my embrace, now that thou art indeed a child of God."

"Having revealed my feelings to one human being, I no longer felt that it would be sacrilege to disclose them to others. I began to think it was my duty to speak to my younger brother about the momentous concerns of eternity.

"For several days I made frequent resolutions to do it, but as often as an opportunity presented, my heart failed me, and I could not bring myself up to the effort.

"I know not how it is, but I have often observed, that we feel much more reluctance in speaking to our family friends on the subject of religion, than we do in speaking to others.

"Several days had elapsed since I had communicated my feelings to my mother. My brother and myself were working together in the same field. In my morning devotions I had fervently implored divine direction in relation to the communication I had determined to make that day to him. A short suspension of our labours brought the desired opportunity. I will not attempt to describe my feelings, nor his agitation. I soon found that his feelings and views had undergone the same change that mine had, and that he ascribed his first serious impressions to the religious exercises of the interesting Sabbath that followed my father's death. This intelligence in relation to my brother was of course delightful tidings to my mother. She saw new evidence that God does all things well, and that he can make the most afflictive dispensations immediately subservient to his purposes of mercy.

"She proposed that I should now act as the chaplain to the family. I accordingly acceded to her request, and performed divine service regularly on Sundays from that time to the organization of an Episcopal church in this community, a period of almost twenty years. As the land around us began to be taken up, and settlers came in, seve-

Results of a regular performance of the liturgy.

ral of our neighbours repaired to our house regularly on Sundays. They at first came out of curiosity, but in time they became attached to the liturgy, and substantially pious. And several of these individuals ascribed their first religious impressions to the solemn and sublime devotions of the Prayer Book. Thus a regular performance of the liturgy in a private family was the means not only of laying the foundation of a church, but of awakening numbers to seriousness."

CHAPTER II.

THE HOLY SUPPER.

“Sweet awful hour!—the only sound,
One gentle footstep gliding round,
Offering by turns, on Jesus' part,
The cross to every hand and heart.”

KEBLE.

I WAS anxious that the reader should have presented to him the scene which was acted in Joseph M'Ellen's house, the Sunday after his death, in the language of one that was present, and upon whom that solemn scene made a deep and lasting impression; and I accordingly gave the statements in Robert M'Ellen's own words, from a manuscript sketch which I obtained from him. The history of the M'Ellen family will be continued through the present chapter by copying from the same manuscript. Robert M'Ellen remarks,—

“Divine Providence continued to send afflictions along with our comforts. In about six weeks after my father's death, three of the youngest members of our family, a brother and two sisters, were, within a few days of each other, called from time to eternity. My mother had scarcely recovered from the fatigue occasioned by attendance upon my father during his last illness, when she was again called to spend wakeful nights by the bedside of her sick and dying children. The fatigue she had to endure, was increased by the circumstances of our situation. The country was then so new, and thinly inhabited, that we could scarcely be said to have neighbours. Around us, on all sides, spread the dense and lengthening forest. When

The sick room.

night came on, the howl of the wolf was heard; but no friendly and kind-hearted neighbours entered our dwelling to watch by the bedside of the sick.

“The fatigue occasioned by continual watching, and the anguish with which my mother’s heart was wrung, in following her husband and three of her children, within so short a period, to the grave, brought on a fever. From the commencement of her illness, she had a strong presentiment that she should never rise from that sick bed. Several of the ties that once bound her to the earth were now broken. One half of her children were gone. The partner of her toils and hopes was sleeping in the earth. In all these dispensations she recognised the hand of God. She did not repine. The same fever which cut down my father was now burning through her veins. She thought she should die. One evening she called us all around her bed, and told us so. ‘And now,’ said she, ‘my children, remember this hour. See me here all weakness—all pain. Of what avail to me now would be all the honours, and pleasures, and wealth of the world? To me they now appear lighter than the dust in the balance. There is but one object upon which my eye rests with satisfaction; and that object is *Christ crucified*. O, my children, if you would have the arms of everlasting mercy underneath you in such an hour as this, join yourselves by a perpetual covenant unto the Saviour of sinners; follow him through life, and he will support you in death.’ She then charged me and my brother to be an example and pattern to our young orphan sister. She said, that she felt no reluctance in resigning her soul to her heavenly Father. She felt no reluctance in committing her children to the care and kindness of that God to whom she had dedicated them in baptism. She had but one earthly wish, and that was, that she might once more, before she left this clay tenement, receive the consecrated symbols of her Saviour’s dying love.

“It so happened, that on that very evening, there arrived at our abode some of our old acquaintances from the place

The effort to gratify a mother's dying wish.

of my nativity. They were of course distressed by our affliction. The conversation very soon took a serious turn. I mentioned my mother's request, and lamented that we were so far removed from any clergyman. Our friends then told us that in the town of M——, where they stayed two nights before, they met some of their old friends who had taken up their residence in that town a number of years previous. Among the other intelligence that they had to communicate to them was, that a missionary of the Episcopal church had preached several times to them, and was designing to spend a number of weeks in that quarter; and that although they formerly had strong prejudices against that church, they began to think more favourably of it.

“No sooner had I received this information than my resolution was taken. I determined to start with the earliest dawn for M——. I sat by the bedside of my mother till the first faint streaks of light began to appear in the eastern sky. I then gently pressed her hand in mine, and told her that I was going after *the man of God*, and would soon return. I immediately went to the door; but, ere I closed it, I turned to gaze again upon the face of my dear mother. A death-like expression sat upon that face. I closed the door. The heavens were still hung with blackness—a sense of perfect desolateness came over me. The thought was strongly impressed upon my mind, that I should never again see my mother alive. I felt anxious to gratify the wish she had expressed; yet I could not endure the thought of her dying while I was absent. My hand was still on the door when I heard her faintly articulate my name. I hastily raised the latch, and went to her bed. ‘My son,’ said she, ‘do not leave me until you have commended me to God in prayer.’ I felt I had done wrong. My heart, however, was too full to speak. I took down the Prayer Book, and opened to the prayer ‘for a sick person.’ Never before did words sink so deep into my soul. It seemed to me as though this prayer had been formed on purpose for that occasion—it suited so

The missionary.

exactly to the case, and accorded so perfectly with my feelings. No other words could have unburdened my heart. Kneeling by the bedside, I thus prayed:—

“ ‘O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need, look down from heaven, we humbly beseech thee, behold, visit, and relieve this thy sick servant. Look upon her with the eyes of thy mercy; comfort her with a sense of thy goodness; preserve her from the temptations of the enemy; give her patience under her affliction; and, in thy good time, restore her to health, and enable her to lead the residue of her life in thy fear, and to thy glory; or else give her grace so to take thy visitation, that after this painful life is ended, she may dwell with thee in life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ ”

“ I had no sooner uttered the words of this prayer, than my mind felt relieved. My heart grew lighter. I had committed my mother into the hands of God, and I felt that she was safe.

“ It required but a few minutes to get my horse in readiness, and I rode forward with a bounding heart towards M——. The sun had sunk below the western horizon before I reached the place of my destination. The distance I had to travel was upwards of forty miles. This, considering the country I had to pass through, was a fatiguing ride. Some part of the way, the trees were barely cut down to designate the road; and in other parts, the traveller had no other guide than the marks that had been made by an incision in the trees. The weary way was at length passed over. I found the missionary at the house of a respectable farmer. I told him my errand. The tear glistened in his eye as I briefly told him the story of our afflictions. He promptly said he would accompany me on the morrow. The farmer kindly offered me a bed, to which I soon retired; not, however, till we had kneeled around the family altar.

“ We were on our way early the next morning. There was nothing morose or repulsive in the countenance or

Qualifications for the communion.

manners of the missionary. Although sedate, he was very cheerful. Although dignified, he had the happy faculty of drawing one immediately into familiar conversation. We rode along together for a number of miles, conversing about things that were neither altogether secular nor altogether religious. As I was a stranger to him, he wished to elicit my views. He soon discovered that I had a love for religion, and before I was aware of it, drew from me the whole history of my religious exercises. I told him I wished to join my mother in partaking of the holy communion. He replied that the test for self-examination was well expressed in our catechism,—‘Those who desire to come to the Lord’s supper, are to examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life—have a lively faith in God’s mercy, through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and be in charity with all men.’

“Repentance, reformation, faith, love to God and to our fellow men, were, he said, included in this requirement. ‘And our church,’ continued he, ‘designs to admit no one to the sacramental table who does not give evidence of these qualifications.’ The conversation continued upon this and similar subjects, through the remainder of the day; and I derived much edification and instruction from the discourse of this godly man. His conversation quite beguiled the tediousness of the journey; and almost before I thought of it, we had arrived in view of our cottage. I hastily rode forward, sprung from my horse, and rushed into the house. I met my brother Joseph at the door. ‘Is she alive?’ said I, but did not wait for an answer—I was instantly by her bedside, and found her more comfortable than when I left her. The missionary understood the language of affection, and did not think it rudeness, though I left him so unceremoniously. My brother took charge of his horse, and invited him in.

“The next morning was mentioned as the time of celebrating the communion. In the course of the evening, the

Mary M'Ellen an instance of early piety.

missionary received such evidence, from my brother's conversation, of his having passed through the 'new birth unto righteousness,' that he advised him to receive the sacrament on the morrow.

"His conversation with my mother was very reviving to her. He seemed to us all like a ministering angel. He spoke to my sister Mary, and entreated her to join her brothers, now that they were on their way to Zion. Mary was only fifteen years old at this time. Her heart was all tenderness and sensibility. She could not speak, but burst into a flood of tears. Since my father's death she had been apparently very thoughtful and serious. I had once or twice seen the tears gush from her eyes, while reading to herself in the Bible; but the moment she perceived I observed her, she made an effort to be more than ordinarily cheerful. I supposed that these effusions of sensibility were called forth by the recollection of the death of her little sisters and her father.

"The morning came. It was in one of the summer months. All nature was fresh and fair. The sun was pouring down his warm rays upon the smiling earth. Some time before the appointed hour for celebrating the holy eucharist, I walked out for the purpose of religious meditation. I directed my course towards a large tree that stood at no great distance from the house, that I might enjoy the coolness of its shade. As I approached the tree, I observed the slender form of my sister. She was in the act of prayer, and on her knees. I stole softly along to her side, without apprizing her of my presence. She seemed to be pouring out her soul in all the fervency of devotion. She was so young and so amiable, and appeared so interesting, and so heavenly, in the lone field, lifting up her heart to God, that I could hardly refrain from weeping. She was startled, when, having finished her devotions, she discovered me at her side. But I clasped her in my arms, pressed her to my bosom, and told her it gave me more pleasure to see her where I had seen her, than it would to

The communicant's sense of unworthiness.

have seen her on a throne. She wept and sobbed aloud for a long time. At length she said, 'O that I was a Christian.' I tried to point out the way in which she should seek to be one indeed. I soon learnt that her mind was religiously impressed at the very time, and by the very circumstances, that mine was. That which agitated her on the present occasion was, her anxiety to join us in partaking of the Lord's supper. Although she had for some time felt a heavenly peace of mind, still she had such a deep sense of her own unworthiness, that it made her tremble to think of presuming to approach the table of the Lord. By her consent I went to the house, and intimated to the missionary that I wished to take a short walk with him: I immediately retraced my steps to the same tree, and on the way informed him of the object for which I had called him out. He appeared thoughtful, but said nothing.

"When we had come where my sister was, he sat himself down in the shade, and with an affectionate voice said, 'I am rejoiced, Mary, to hear that you are desirous to set your face towards Zion. The holy eucharist which we are soon to celebrate, is designed "to strengthen and refresh our souls," that "we may run and not be weary, and that we may walk and not faint."' "

"He then took a Prayer Book out of his pocket, and continued, 'You feel too unworthy to come to the feast of the Lamb. I will read you part of the prayer in the communion service, immediately before the consecration of the elements, which is said in the name of all those who are about to receive the communion. "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy." You see that none of us trust in our own worthiness, but in the worthiness of Christ. In going to the holy supper, you go trusting in the name and merits of Jesus. If you have truly repented

Administration of the Lord's supper to the sick.

of your sins, and are resolved to lead a new life, by refusing to go to the table of the Lord, you declare that you have not faith in the atoning blood of Christ.' We all returned in company to the house. The hour had arrived for the service to commence.

"All that have ever witnessed the celebration of the Lord's supper in public, agreeably to the service of our church, pronounce it the most impressive scene that they ever witnessed. But there is something still more impressive where it is celebrated in a sick room.

"The idea that one of the persons who is about to partake of the sacred elements will, in a few hours, partake of the feast of the Lamb in the kingdom of God, spreads an awe and sacredness over every thing around us. This person is one of our family friends, to whom we feel endeared by ten thousand sacred recollections. Perhaps it is a mother. The traces of the bony fingers of death appear on her countenance. That eye which watched over us in infancy and childhood is faded and sunken. That look of kindness which dwelt so fondly *on us* has almost disappeared beneath the pale signet of the king of terrors. 'There lies my mother, whose bosom was my pillow, and whose arms were my cradle. She is receiving the bread and wine for the last time on earth. Soon that dear form will be beneath the turf, and that pure spirit beyond the skies.' O there is enough in these thoughts to hallow every feeling!

"I know not what may be the objection that some religious denominations have to administering the communion to the sick. I rejoice that our church recognises the propriety of it. It is certainly an act which invigorates the soul of the sick, and makes deep and lasting impressions upon those who witness it.

"Such, at all events, were the happy effects of the administration of the Lord's supper in the instance of which I am now speaking.

"The service commenced. The voice of the missionary on this occasion was more than usually soft and plaintive.

The confession of sin.

He was a man of sensibility. He had heard the story of our afflictions, and he was acquainted with the history of our blessings. The promptings of his own heart expounded to him the meaning of that sacred injunction, 'of weeping with those that weep.' To me the whole scene was a scene of intense interest. As the service proceeded, my thoughts became completely engrossed in the devotions of this sublime office. I was particularly struck with *the confession*. It seemed to meet my case exactly. Had an angel dictated it, it could not have expressed more fully the feelings that were then glowing in my bosom. It seemed as though we were in the very porch of heaven, as the missionary, with tremulous and silvery tones, breathed forth its penitential acknowledgments—'Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine majesty; provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father.' Never before did I feel so much the weight and hatefulness of sin, as while uttering this confession. Every now and then I heard my mother's voice faintly articulating some part of this prayer. In the sublime devotions of the communion service, her thoughts seemed to be borne away from earth.

"The elements were now consecrated. I looked at my mother, and saw that she was calm and tranquil. Her eye rested upon myself and my brother, as we came forward, and kneeled before the table, on which were placed the symbols of the broken and bleeding body of Jesus. She seemed to look a blessing towards us. Twice had the man of God said, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto ever-

A mother's emotions.

lasting life,' before my sister left her seat,—she then rose and came, and kneeled by my side. Her whole frame shook with emotion. My mother knew nothing of her state of mind, or of her determination.

“To see her young and tender daughter so unexpectedly come forward and consecrate herself to God, aroused in her bosom a tide of feeling that she could not control. The tears rushed down her cheeks, and the serenity that had rested upon her countenance fled. She drew the clothes of the bed over her face, and sobbed aloud. For a few moments there was perfect silence in the room. Then, in trembling accents, the missionary proceeded in the administration of the sacrament. He went to my mother, and presented the elements to her. As she received the sacred chalice, ere she raised it to her lips, she lifted up her eyes, and said aloud, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Mine eyes have seen all my children eating at thy table. Grant that I and they may sit down together at thy table in thy kingdom above. I had thought to leave these children orphans, but they cannot be orphans, since adopted into thy family. Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil.’”

I cannot here refrain from relating an incident illustrative of the truth of several points adverted to in the preceding narrative, although it has no sort of connexion with the history of the M'Ellen family. Whatever tends to keep alive a spirit of devotion, and a principle of vital godliness in the wilderness, is worthy of attention.

About fifteen years ago, a young married couple, who had spent their childhood amid the industry, and staid habits, and multiplied religious privileges of a New England village, emigrated to the far west. The fourth year

after their marriage, they found themselves on the banks of the Mississippi, just opposite the point where that proud river receives, as its rich tributary, all the gathered waters of the Missouri. Never did the foot of man tread upon a richer soil, or the human eye gaze around upon a more beautiful scenery.

The land of prairies, of brooks and rivers, of corn and wheat, and of metals, was all before them. Wealth began to flow in. Both sons and daughters, which are "an heritage from the Lord," were given to them. Their little flock began to appear, "like olive branches, round about their table."

All this time, however, there was one very serious drawback to their comforts. Their religious privileges they had left behind them. There was a famine of the Word in the land in which they dwelt. Like many of New England's children, they had been blessed with pious parents. The efforts of those parents to lead their offspring to Christ had not been in vain. This couple, previous to their emigration, had taken upon them the vows of the covenant, and united themselves to the Lord as his people. They had been reared from their childhood in the bosom of the Episcopal church; and, when they were awakened to spiritual discernment, they found that she, in whose bosom they had been cherished, *had drink for the thirsty, and bread for the hungry*. Thus, their attachment to her communion became more ardent and devoted. For nine years, however, they lived on the banks of the Mississippi without seeing the face of an Episcopal clergyman, more than once or twice, during that whole period. Occasionally, they were permitted to hear a sermon from some itinerant preacher or missionary of the Methodist or Presbyterian church. Gladly did they embrace every such opportunity; and truly grateful did they feel to Heaven for this refreshment in the wilderness. As year after year passed away, they became truly hungry for the bread of life. They longed to see again one of those days when

A mother's last wish.

they used to go up together to the house of the Lord, and unite in the hallowed strains of their own beloved liturgy.

At length the hand of disease was laid upon the mother. Though comparatively young, and in possession of a firm constitution—though there was immediately procured in her behalf all the medical aid which the country afforded—the ravages of disease were neither stayed nor turned back. On the other hand, it became but too apparent to all around her that she was wasting down to death.

As she lay stretched on the couch of languishing, day after day growing more and more feeble, she herself came to the conclusion, that she was on her dying bed. At such a time it was natural that her mind should revert to the scenes of her early life, when she was in the midst of her friends, and a mother's kindness watched her every step.

Those friends were now all far away. No mother's soft gentle hand now rested on her pale, burning brow! But it was not the absence of these friends that drew the deep sigh from her bosom, and caused the big tear to roll down her cheek. Her little ones stood around her bed: she looked on them, and then she wept! She had sought to train them in the way everlasting. Like the M'Ellen family, these Christian parents had converted their dwelling on the Sabbath into a chapel, and their children were taught to mingle their little voices in the responses of the service.

This sick and dying mother felt that she was willing to give up her husband and children to God; but when she saw those dear little ones stand around her bed, she remembered that they had not been baptized in the name of the holy Trinity. She felt that she could not die, till they had been sacramentally given up to God. It was this that made the tears trickle down her pale cheek. And then too she felt, that it was a long, long while, since she had received the memorials of her Saviour's dying love. And now that death was pressing hard upon her, she felt that she needed the strengthening influence of that holy ordinance to help

A sister.

Conclusion.

her over Jordan. But Elijah was not there—the prophet could not be found. There was but one Episcopal clergyman then in the whole state, and he resided more than two hundred miles distant. A message, however, was immediately despatched to him. For two or three days, the hope was cherished, that the flickering flame of life would last till the man of God arrived. Often did this dying disciple say—“Let me hear the voice of Christ’s minister, welcoming my offspring into the Redeemer’s fold, and invoking the blessings of God on the sacramental bread and wine; let me once more receive those emblems of Christ’s broken and bleeding body, and I shall be ready to bid adieu to all earthly scenes.”

But in this last wish, the dying mother, unlike Mrs. M’Ellen, was ungratified. She could not await the slow arrival of the distant missionary. Already the silver cord was loosed, and her spirit, fixing all its hopes on the blood of the everlasting covenant, winged its way to the blessed mansions of peace.

She, whose wishes, and sorrows, and privations, and dissolution have been described, was one whom the author well knew; yea, one whom he tenderly loved,—one who bore to him the interesting relation of an only sister.

The manuscript narrative of Robert M’Ellen, which has been interrupted by the relation of the preceding incident, and from which the contents of this chapter have been principally transcribed, states, that Mrs. M’Ellen’s fever in a few days after the visit of the missionary took a favourable turn, and she was speedily restored to health. It also gives a history of the family up to the time of my acquaintance with them, in which are to be found several interesting details. But I shall at once conduct the reader into the midst of the affecting scene connected with the history of this family which fell under my own observation.

CHAPTER III.

A DEATH SCENE.

The room I well remember.....
.....and all the faces too
That crowded dark and mournfully around,
This I remember well ; but better still
I do remember, and will ne'er forget,
The dying eye ! That eye alone was bright,
And brighter grew, as nearer death approach'd."

POLLOK.

ACCORDING to the suggestion made at the close of the preceding chapter, I now hasten to give the reader some account of the interesting and affecting scene I witnessed in the dwelling of Robert M'Ellen, on the Sunday evening that I preached at his house.

The log-dwelling that had formerly been occupied by the M'Ellen family had been removed, and in its place there appeared a neat and spacious farm-house. This was now the residence of Robert M'Ellen, in whose family his aged and venerable mother was an inmate.

I have before observed that it was in the month of June when I first approached this dwelling. There did not then spread a wide and impenetrable forest around it ; but for miles in every direction there stretched before the delighted eye finely cultivated fields, luxuriant orchards, and well-arranged farm-houses. Here and there were seen fragments of that once boundless forest, reserved by the cultivator of the earth, for a retreat to shelter him from the summer's heat, and for fuel to dispel the winter's cold. The foliage of the trees at this time was unusually thick, rich, and

Elizabeth M'Ellen.

beautiful. Not one of those ten thousand leaves which had so recently burst into being had as yet felt the blighting touch of the worm, the sun, or the frost; but they all appeared fresh and verdant.

On either side of this dwelling were wheat fields waving in the gentle breeze, in all the luxuriance of perfect verdure.

As I was passing through this rich landscape, there seemed to ascend from the soft and beautiful bosom of the earth ten thousand sounds of praise to the Great Eternal. There was much in the scenery around me, connected with the history of the inhabitants of the dwelling I was approaching, to attune my feelings to the solemnities of worship.

I did not arrive till the appointed hour of service. A few of the neighbours had come in, but the families of Robert and Joseph M'Ellen, being very numerous, constituted the majority of the congregation.

I was led immediately into the room where this grave and devout group were assembled. Before the chair where I was seated was placed a cherry stand, and on it lay a Bible and Prayer Book. This was the very piece of furniture, and these the very books, with which, in the minds of that family, were associated so many sacred recollections, and which, the reader will readily remember, were used on a very interesting occasion twenty-five years before.

Near the stand sat the aged and venerable Elizabeth M'Ellen. As the minds of all were in a fit frame for devotion, this was very properly considered no time for formal introductions. But although I had never before seen this worthy woman, I could not be mistaken. There was in her countenance, which age had in vain strove to disfigure with wrinkles, an expression of intelligence and of loftiness of purpose that I have seldom witnessed. By her side sat her daughter, who had rejected numerous advantageous offers of marriage, from her unwillingness to be separated, or to allow any of her affection or attention to be withdrawn, from her mother.

What is implied in infant dedication.

The service commenced; I observed with pleasure that Mrs. M'Ellen joined audibly in the responses, and that all her grandchildren, for they were all present, seemed anxious to imitate her example. They all had their Prayer Books, though several of them were quite young, and all seemed to unite in the service with interest and devotion. How differently educated were these families, who, till recently, had never enjoyed the ministrations of the sanctuary, from some that I have seen in old established congregations!

These parents attached some meaning to the "solemn vow, promise, and profession" that they made in the name of their children, when they brought them to the sacred waters of baptism. They viewed the dedication of their children to God in this holy ordinance, as one of the most interesting and momentous events in their whole history. They gave them up in faith, fully believing that God "for his part would surely keep and perform the promise"* he had made, to those "rightly" given up to him in baptism: and then they sought most diligently to bring up their baptized offspring "*to lead a godly and a Christian life.*"† Their efforts were not in vain. The results of this religious training and dedication of their children to God were seen in the correct deportment and early seriousness of those children.

On the present occasion the scene was truly interesting. It must have been a scene upon which an angel could have looked down with a smile. As the worshippers kneeled down in prayer, the place seemed "none other but the house of God and the gate of heaven." Agreeably to the excellent provision of our admirable liturgy, the devotions were not all performed by one voice; but there went up many united voices together, and there might have then been heard the song of praise ascending from the palsied lip of age and the lisping tongue of infancy.

* Baptismal office for Infants. See the 27th of the 39 Articles.

† Ibid.

The power of trust in God.

According to a custom which I have found useful on such occasions, I did not preach a written sermon, but discoursed in a plain and familiar manner on a passage of Scripture, leaving something to be suggested by the circumstances around me.

The passage selected for this occasion was the following : —“*In the Lord put I my trust.*” Psalm xi. 1.

After having shown the ground of trust in God, and what it is to trust in him, I proceeded to portray the blessedness of trusting in him. On this article I felt confident that I was saying what a number around me were able to bear testimony to. And as my eye fell upon the aged and venerable form of Mrs. M'Ellen, who seemed even then “ripe for the hand of the reaper, as a shock of corn in his season,” I could not refrain from descanting upon the power of trust in God, in the last trying hour when the sun of life goes down ; upon its power to sustain the sinking energies of the soul in that awful moment when it enters the dark valley of the shadow of death. “Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord ;” for to him, in the hour of death, the Lord will be a Sun and a Shield,—a Sun to enlighten the dark chasm through which he must pass, and a Shield to protect him from the fiery darts of the enemy. It is in this hour that the Great Shepherd doth carry his confiding children in his arms, and bear them in his bosom to the haven of everlasting rest.

I saw these remarks went to the heart of her who was soon to test their truth by actual experiment.

The hymn selected to close the religious exercises was the following :—

“When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes,” &c.

Though feeble and infirm, I observed that Mrs. M'Ellen, in conformity to the appropriate custom universally practised in our church, of standing while praising God, arose

Blissful death.

at the commencement of the hymn. As she stood among those who were lauding the Most High, methought *there* was a form, and an attitude, worthy of being immortalized by the hand of a Raphael ; for hers had been one of the first order of fine forms, both tall and graceful. The weight of nearly ninety years now caused her to stoop. She united her voice in the singing, and swelled the sound of praise.

The sun had just sunk beneath the horizon, and had left that beautiful but indescribable aspect on the whole face of nature, which you have often seen on a summer's day to rest upon those objects over which some tree hath thrown its shade. There was a universal stillness pervading the surrounding scene ; and the voice of the singers went up sweetly to the gates of heaven. To the last line, and the last note in the last line, the voice of Elizabeth M'Ellen was distinctly heard. Her voice seemed to swell with richer and more animated sounds in the concluding verse, where the Christian's rest is anticipated,—

“ There I shall bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.”

This was her last earthly song.—She sunk gently into her seat. For a moment a slight quivering shook her frame. Then all motion ceased. Her arms hung nerveless at her side, and her head reclined on her shoulder.

The voices of the singers were raised in the ascription of praise to the Triune God, but her spirit had left its clay tenement, and gone to sing the doxology in the blissful mansions of departed saints,—had gone to “ bathe in seas of heavenly rest.”

I shall close this narration with an account of her funeral.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURIAL.

“Hark! how the sacred calm that breathes around
Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease,
In still small accents whispering from the ground,
A grateful earnest of eternal peace.”

GRAY.

To the reflecting mind a funeral scene is always instructive. It was infinite wisdom that dictated the sentiment, that “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting.” It is true that some men can remain unmoved and unimpressed amid the most solemn scenes of death. But they, who look at the relation of things, and gather, from the events transpiring around them, that moral instruction which God intends they shall convey, can hardly fail to have their “heart made better” by the solemnities of a funeral scene. I speak now particularly of a funeral in the country.

No one that has been bred in the country can have witnessed a funeral in the city without having felt some violence done to the sensibilities of his heart. I have often stood at the corner of some square, upon whose area might be seen, from the earliest dawn even to the midnight hour, bustling thousands, and observed the train of coaches with their sable equipments moving on upon their melancholy errand, with slow and solemn pace, through this mass of beings, and wondered that it made so slight an impression upon the busy crowd. The funeral train, as it passed, perhaps flung a momentary feeling of solemnity upon the

Funeral in the country.

lookers-on; but in an instant the impression was gone. It was like a passing cloud that had darkened, for one fleeting instant, the splendour of the sun, and then was for ever lost in the effulgence of his bright beams. There was no fellow feeling between the gay world without and the broken-hearted mourners within those vehicles.

A funeral in the country presents a different aspect. When death enters the humblest cottage, the sympathies of the community are awakened; the whole surrounding neighbourhood participate in the feelings of the bereaved, and make every sacrifice to be present to pay their last respect to the dead. At the appointed hour of the funeral there may be seen, in all directions, the repose and stillness of a Sabbath season. Men, who on no other occasion are present to witness religious exercises, deem it a debt they owe to society, to attend all the funerals in their neighbourhood.

The worth, distinguished piety, and singular death of Elizabeth M'Ellen, had drawn an immense concourse of people to witness her obsequies.

Every thing was in readiness when I arrived; and they were waiting to form the procession. The burial ground was about a quarter of a mile distant from Robert M'Ellen's house. Twelve strong-framed, but hoary headed men had been selected to bear the body to the grave; and on each side of the coffin there walked three aged and infirm women as pall-bearers. Behind the coffin followed the children and grand children of the deceased; and in their rear the promiscuous multitude who had been drawn together, on this occasion, either by curiosity or regard for the deceased.

The procession was no sooner in motion, than an aged and venerable man, whom I had always seen at church when I preached at my missionary station in that neighbourhood, joined me, and walked by my side. As we preceded the procession, we were frequently so far before the bearers that we might have, with propriety, engaged in conversation. But I was too deeply impressed with

The old farmer.

the solemnity of the present scene, and the recollection of the past history of this family, to open my lips. For a short distance we moved on in silence; then, in a subdued and under tone of voice, the aged man said, "Elizabeth has gone to rest."

I replied, "that I believed she had died, 'having the testimony of a good conscience, in the communion of the catholic church, in the confidence of a certain faith, in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope, in favour with God, and in perfect charity with the world.' "*"

"O yes," said the honest and warm-hearted man, "I have known her for a long time. I lived on the hill yonder when all this country was covered with woods—when the neighbours could not see each other's houses. I have known Elizabeth ever since. When we first came into this country, I thought I would go down one Sunday, and get acquainted with the M'Ellen family. I had never thought much about religion, and expected to find the folks there thinking and feeling as I did.

"On the way, I thought of a thousand amusing things to say, and was determined to convince them that I was a clever fellow. I therefore entered the house without much ceremony; but in an instant all my merry thoughts were gone. Instead of finding the family lounging round in idleness, or engaged in some amusement, the first thing that struck my eye was the whole family on their knees, except Robert, who, just the moment I entered, was reading the fourth commandment, '*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.*' My attention was riveted; my conscience began to awake. And when, at the close of the commandment, they all around the room, young and old, put up this petition, 'Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law,' I experienced sensations that I shall never forget. When the service and sermon were through, the family very cordially welcomed me to their house, saying that they would have church

* From the office of the Visitation of the Sick.

there the next Sunday, and should be happy if I would attend. I returned home, thoughtful. The sermon that was read dwelt upon my mind. The subject was *the use of the means of grace*; and the object of the discourse was, to show that we never need to expect salvation until we seek for it, and seek for it in the appointed way. All this was contrary to the ideas I had long cherished. I had been early taught that man can do nothing towards obtaining salvation, and that he must wait until moved by the irresistible grace of God. I had for many years been soothing my conscience with the belief that, if I was ever saved, it would be a work in which I could exert no agency; that I had nothing to do but to sit still, and let God choose his own time and way in which to bring me to himself. I therefore felt no guilt arising from my neglect of repentance.

“The design of this discourse was to show that it was every man’s duty to repent at once, and make an immediate surrender of himself to God; that every man who neglected this would be the author of his own destruction; that, instead of having nothing to do, we had a great deal to do; and that no man could escape who did not do whatever his hand found to do with all his might; that the first thing that we had to do was, to go to Christ, and cast ourselves, as perishing sinners, on his atoning blood; that we might be saved by his grace and sanctified by his Spirit.

“I thought the sermon had a good deal of good sense and scripture on its side. I mused on this subject most of the following week. The next Sunday, I and my wife Jane went down to the M’Ellens, and stayed through both services. Jane’s heart, I believe, was more tender than mine. She was entirely overcome by the sermon, which was on this text, ‘What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’

“Jane was so much affected that she wept. Mrs. M’Ellen had a tender heart. As soon as the exercises were through, she went to Jane, and kindly took her by

the hand, and told her she was happy to see her and form an acquaintance with her; but most of all happy to see that she felt interested in the momentous concerns of eternity.

“‘Alas!’ said Jane, ‘I have neglected these things all my life, and I fear I have lost my soul.’

“I shall never forget with what a look of kindness Elizabeth M'Ellen then fixed her eyes upon Jane. ‘No,’ said she, ‘my dear woman, there is an all-sufficient Saviour for you.’ She then talked so engagingly and affectionately about Jesus, and his dying for poor sinners, that she made us all weep.

“On our way home, my wife said to me, ‘James, why have we not thought of these things before?—*What will it profit us*, if we gain the whole world, and at last lose our souls?’ My heart was too full to make any reply.”

“From this time, Jane began to read her Bible and pray. She soon found peace. After this we attended church, at the house of the M'Ellens, constantly.

“O yes, it was Elizabeth M'Ellen that first turned the eye of my poor Jane to Jesus. Poor Jane! she died about three years ago; but she died blessing Elizabeth M'Ellen, and rejoicing in God her Saviour.”

Here the worthy man drew the back of his hand across his face, to brush away the big tears that had gushed forth at the remembrance of his departed wife.

He then continued—“Yes, Elizabeth has done much for us. It was she that first tore from me the belief that, if saved at all, I should be saved by such a display of divine sovereignty as would supersede all necessity of personal effort, on my part, to obtain salvation; she tore from me this broken reed upon which I was leaning. It was she that brought me fully to see myself as a sinner, standing on the brink of ruin, and needing an infinite Saviour. It was she that first taught me to see the excellencies of that invaluable treasure, *the Prayer Book*—the book next, in my mind, to the Bible. Its prayers have not only

The burial service.

helped my devotions, but have taught me how to live ; and in some measure, I hope, prepared me to die.

“ Yes, she taught me to love the Prayer Book ; and I thank my God that I know something of its worth. I find I can in no other way get so far into the porch of Heaven, as with its words in my mouth, and its sentiments glowing in my heart.”

My friend would have continued his conversation, but we had now already entered the gate of the burial ground ; and the moment had arrived, when one of the most impressive offices of that liturgy, which he had been so highly eulogizing, was to commence.

The ground allotted to the dead, was guarded from the unhallowed tread of beasts, by a strong enclosure. The spot was some distance from the road.

Near the gate of the graveyard there was a cluster of tall pines. As the coffin passed beneath them, their waving tops seemed to utter a plaintive sigh. The tread of the long procession seemed to be noiseless. All were moving on, pensive and silent.

But the stillness of the surrounding scene was now, perhaps, to many who were then present, *unexpectedly* interrupted by the sound of these words : “ I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

There was something in these words, connected with the place where they were uttered, that seemed to send a thrill through every heart in the procession. The sound of these words died away on the air, and then we moved on a few paces in silence.

The silence was soon again interrupted by this solemn declaration of Job : “ I know that my Redeemer liveth. and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

Decorums of burial.

We had by this time arrived at the grave. I perceived, from the plain stone that was set up to inform the stranger what dust mouldered beneath it, that the grave of Elizabeth M'Ellen was dug by the side of her husband's. No delay was occasioned by opening the coffin. The descendants of the deceased had taken their last look of their mother before she was brought into the open air; and they revolted at the idea of exposing her corpse, at the grave, to the gaze of a promiscuous multitude. This custom, even now almost universally prevalent in the country, appears to me to be among the remains of barbarism, and must ever shock the feelings of refined sensibility.

The coffin was immediately placed upon two spades, which were laid transversely over the grave.

The mourners gathered around, and there seemed much in the following sentences that were rehearsed, to compose the feelings, and prepare the minds of all for the scene that was to succeed.

“Man that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower. He fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.”

“In the midst of life we are in death: Of whom may we seek for succour but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased.”

“Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.”

When these sentences had been rehearsed, the coffin was let down into the grave. The eyes of all the M'Ellen family were dim with tears; but they followed the descending coffin down to its deep and dark resting place. There was no loud wailing—no affected grief—no mockery of woe. It was nature yearning over the grave of one that was tenderly loved. Nature bid them weep: but their eyes glistened with hope, even while they were filled with tears. They looked away from the grave up to that heavenly

Act of interment.

country, where they had every reason to believe the soul of their departed mother was resplendent, as a star in the firmament of heaven.

If the heart of one spectator remained untouched by the solemnities that had been already witnessed, surely it must have relented when the spade was thrust into the earth, and the solemn act of interment pronounced :

“Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our deceased sister, we therefore commit her body to the ground ; earth to earth”—at the repetition of each of these words, the clod fell from the spade upon the coffin lid—*“ashes to ashes, dust to dust : looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; at whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead ; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed and made like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty workings, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.”*

The rubric that is placed immediately after the act of interment in the burial service directs that the passage from Revelations, there inserted, shall be *said* or *sung*.

The worthy old man who walked by my side to the grave, as I afterwards learned, had the ordering of the funeral ; and he had made arrangement to have that passage sung. I was ignorant of this arrangement. When, therefore, he and those that were around him struck into a chant, and in loud thrilling notes rehearsed that sublime passage, *“I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, —Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours,”*—I felt almost overpowered by the unexpectedness and fine effect of the performance.

There was something truly touching in this scene. A large concourse of people were gathered around the remains

Singing at the grave.

of an aged and deceased Christian. The coffin had been let down into the grave, and they were standing over it. They were away from any human habitation but the habitation of the dead. Their heads were uncovered, and the white locks of many a way-worn pilgrim showed that Elizabeth M'Ellen would soon be followed by some that were standing in that crowd. They were now in the act of praising God, and pouring out the pious emotions of their soul in the language of one of Zion's sacred songs.

There is something peculiarly tender in the strains of vocal music, breathed forth in the open air, and among the graves of the dead. And on the present occasion a gentle gust of wind every now and then swept by, and seemed to float the sweet and mellow voices of the singers up to heaven.

The following verses, from one of our hymns, were then read and sung :—

Thy children, panting to be gone,
May bid the tide of time roll on,
To land them on that happy shore,
Where years and death are known no more !

No more fatigue—no more distress—
Nor sin, nor hell, shall reach that place ;
No groans to mingle with the songs
Resounding from immortal tongues.

No more alarms from ghostly foes—
No cares to break the long repose ;
No midnight shade—no clouded sun—
But sacred, high eternal noon.

O long-expected year ! begin ;
Dawn on this world of wo and sin ;
Fain would we leave this weary road,
To sleep in death, and rest with God.

As soon as the service at the grave was completed, and the procession began to march back in the same order that it had left the house, my aged friend again joined me, and renewed the former conversation.

Return from the burial ground.

“How solemn,” said he, “is this service; it always affects me more than the best funeral sermon. As I was saying to you, *that departed saint, Elizabeth M’Ellen*, has done much for us. She was a pattern of all that was excellent.

“For more than sixty years she had been a pious servant of God, and worthy member of the church of Christ. But she placed no confidence in all she had done. She was the most humble woman I ever saw. Often have I heard her say, that every year she lived, she saw more and more need of a Saviour. Every part of the Prayer Book was familiar to her, and her knowledge of the evil of sin, and of the proneness of human nature to err, made her often turn to dwell upon this part of the general confession:

“‘I have left undone those things which I ought to have done; and I have done those things which I ought not to have done, and there is no health in me.’

“In the latter part of her life, she spent much of her time in prayer; and, as I have been told by her son, when alone, she would often repeat aloud this petition from the burial service:

“‘O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer me not, at my last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.’ Her prayer was granted, and she has gone home to glory.”

The distance, as I have already remarked, from the burial ground to Robert M’Ellen’s house was about a quarter of a mile. The procession returned to the house with the same slow pace that they had observed in going to the place of the dead. The bearers on our return walked immediately in our rear. At length one of them, a silver-headed and venerable looking man, who had evidently been listening with deep interest to the conversation, we had had in going to, and from, the grave, parts of which only he had caught, stepped forward, and walking abreast with the other aged friend and myself, remarked—

“No one has more reason to remember this aged saint than I.”

"I believe that she proved a blessing to all who came within the range of her influence," I replied.

"Yes, she did—she did," he responded, with emphasis;—"I lived to be an aged and gray-headed sinner, before my hard and impenitent heart was opened to receive the truth," he continued; and as he spoke emotion was visible upon every line of his countenance:—"I prided myself upon my honesty, and was vainly expecting to go to heaven on the ground of my good works. I seldom used to attend public worship; for the fact was, I did not enjoy myself there. The prayers and preaching always seemed very dull and tedious to me. One day, about four years ago, hearing Elizabeth M'Ellen was ill, I called to see her. I found her better than I expected. She received me with her usual kindness and affection. In the course of the conversation she complained of her eyes being affected, so that she could hardly read. She asked me if I would not read a few verses for her. Among others was the commencement of the 14th chapter of Revelation '*And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: And I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne.*'—Here Elizabeth suddenly interrupted my reading, and fixing her eyes upon me with an expression I shall never forget, said,

" 'Mr. B—— tell me, do you think you could be happy with that company on mount Zion? Do you love to pray and praise God? I believe you seldom go to church, though you have health and strength to do so. Now if we have no relish for praising God here, how can this employment make us happy in heaven? "

"This question was like a dagger to my heart. I went home, and thought much about it. I could not rest—I could not sleep. The more I looked into my own heart,

Concluding reflections.

the more I saw I had no qualifications to fit me for the society, or the enjoyments of heaven. I cried unto the Lord, and he had mercy on me even in my old age. I now know what it is to love to pray. I hope one day to join in that new song which they sing before the throne."

We had now reached the house, and I was obliged to take an immediate departure.

As I turned from this funeral scene, and hastened on my way to a station where I had an appointment to preach the same evening, the remarks of an eminent servant of God occurred to me, which he offered just after describing the interment of the mortal part of one of God's people :

"We committed our dear sister's body to the earth, in hope of a joyful resurrection from the dead. Thus was the veil of separation drawn for a season. She is departed and no more seen. But she *will* be seen on the right hand of her Redeemer at the last day ; and will again appear, to his glory, a miracle of grace, and monument of mercy."*

And I may now with propriety add, transcribing from the same page—"My reader, shall you and I appear there likewise? Are we 'clothed with humility,' and arrayed in the wedding garment of a Redeemer's righteousness? Are we turned from idols to serve the living God? Are we sensible of our own emptiness, and therefore flying to a Saviour's fulness to obtain grace and strength? Do we indeed live in Christ, and on him, and by him, and with him? Is he over all, and in all? Are we 'lost and found'—dead and alive again? If, through grace, thou dost love and serve the Redeemer that saved Elizabeth M'Ellen, grace, peace, and mercy be with thee! The lines are fallen unto thee in pleasant places; thou hast a goodly heritage. Press forward in duty and wait upon the Lord, possessing thy soul in holy patience. Thou hast just been with me to the grave of a departed believer. Now 'go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.'"

* Legh Richmond. In the tract entitled "*The Dairyman's Daughter*."

THE PARALYTIC.

CHAPTER I.

AFFLICTION.

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

From the 68th Psalm.

AMONG all the unerring declarations contained in the volume of sacred truth, I know of none in stricter unison with the principles of eternal verity, than that “*the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.*” Upon the principles of worldly wisdom, that which is most desirable and most essential to human happiness, is ease of circumstances, and exemption from calamity of every sort. If the evils of life did not flow unavoidably as effects from human conduct—if men were left with the power of deciding, by the mere efforts of their will, what should be their lot from day to day, I suppose there would be no sickness, sorrow, suffering, disappointment, nor calamity in this world, however much sin there might be. This attempt to throw off the present effects of moral evil, while the cause is still retained and cherished, is a fair specimen and striking illustration of the *wisdom of this world.*

And were it possible to give reality to this great *desideratum* in human life, what would be the consequence? Unquestionably, total forgetfulness of God, entire estrangement from him, increased attachment to the world, and

The designs of Providence.

utter inattention to all preparation for a future and subsequent state of being.

It is very possible that some of our readers may not be prepared to admit the correctness of the preceding conclusion. In the blindness of their heart, and the ignorance of their mind, they may think, that if the bright rays of prosperity were unceasingly to shine upon their path, and no clouds ever to obscure their sky, they would be irresistibly drawn by considerations of gratitude to the love and service of their Creator.

Truly, in reference to this subject, “*God’s thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.*” And in reference to the various afflictive dispensations of his providence, and to the bearings which those dispensations have upon the moral character and spiritual interests of individuals, it may with great justness be said, “*that the foolishness of God is wiser than men.*”

It is believed that in the narrative to which the reader’s attention is about to be called, he will see an exemplification of the truth and correctness of several of the foregoing observations. I would here, however, offer the passing remark, that in all the inquiries which we institute in reference to the divine dealings with ourselves or others, affecting our present happiness, we should ever start with these two divinely revealed principles, as the foundation of all our reasoning:—*That the Lord doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men.* And that often, *His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.*

The design of every affliction is not immediately apparent; but the admitted principle—that it did not spring from the dust—that it came from God—and that he never afflicts willingly, will lead us to wait, in humble faith and perfect submission, till that design comes to be unveiled.

The object, therefore, I have in view, in directing the

The uncertainty of the future.

reader's attention to the sorrows and sad reverses which mark the history of this poor paralytic, is

....."To assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man."

The hope is cherished that these pages will convey light and comfort to some sorrowing heart—that they will prompt some, who are bowed down with grief, to pluck blessings from a smiting hand—that they will constrain the sons and daughters of affliction, into whose hands they shall fall, to look up amid all their sorrows, with an eye of adoring love, to that great and glorious Sovereign who reigns among the inhabitants of the earth as well as in the armies of heaven.

The afflicted eastern patriarch, when in the midst of his sorrows turning his thoughts back upon the bright, sunny spots of his past existence, remarks in relation to one of those periods, *Then I said I shall die in my nest, and shall multiply my days as the sand. My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.*

As I have sat in the midst of a happy family, and beheld the fond parents eyeing, with evident emotions of delight, the interesting group that were "like olive branches around their table," I have often thought, 'How little does that kind mother know the ills and reverses which await that child over which for many long years she has watched with so much tenderness and affection!'

And so when I have seen the young of either sex leaving the paternal roof where were passed the days of their childhood, and those early sunny years when the heart is free from care, I have been led to remark, 'How little can these young buoyant spirited beings calculate what will be their future lot!'

John Lewson, the subject of the present brief memoir, was a native of Philadelphia. His parents were highly

John Lawson.

Early life.

respectable people, and disposed to gratify their children in all their wishes. John had the advantage of the best instructors until he was ten years old. Whether his parents at that time were removed from him, or lost their property, I have never been able to ascertain. At all events he then ceased going to school; and taking it into his head that he should like a sailor's life, he was gratified in this wish, and in a few months found himself on the broad expanded ocean, with nothing but sea and sky around him. He soon became greatly attached to this mode of life, and pursued it for seven years. During that period he made many voyages, passed through many dangers, and learnt much evil.

Upon the breaking out of the war between this country and Great Britain in 1812, he determined to relinquish the seafaring life, and seek some avocation on land, by which he could obtain a respectable subsistence. He accordingly directed his course to New York, as the great metropolis of the Union. He was still but a youth, and the future appeared to him full of hope and brightness. He was willing to engage in any business from which he could derive a respectable livelihood. A good opportunity presenting, and some strong inducements being held out, he apprenticed himself to a respectable gentleman in the slating business. With him he continued until he had served his time, and became an expert and accomplished slater. His master still retained him in his employ as a journeyman, and at length sent him to Newbern, N. C., where his family resided. There young Lewson became acquainted with his employer's family, and ere he was aware of it found his feelings deeply interested in *Clara Ann*, a favourite daughter with her father. He did not stop to think of the difficulties that stood in the way, but pressed forward, until every obstacle was removed, and he found himself the happy husband of one worthy of his affections. She had been reared up with great tenderness and delicacy, and, as was the custom in her native town, had been attended by slaves, whose business it was to minister to her every want.

Residence in New York.

Exposure.

Never till she left the home of her childhood had she put her hand to household work, or been cumbered with care of any kind.

After their marriage they went to New York, where Lewson commenced business, and supported his family with ease, in a respectable manner. They lived well, but did not lay aside any thing against a time of need, little thinking their prospects would so soon change. And they were no less improvident about laying up treasures in heaven, than unmindful in reference to making any provision against a reverse of circumstances.

Mr. Lewson, after having been brought through the deep waters, and led to review this period of his life, remarked in relation to it: "At this time the things of religion were altogether neglected. We occasionally went to a place of worship, but it was from custom, or for fashion's sake. It was but seldom that I indulged in any thoughts of a future state. Sometimes, however, such thoughts would come into my mind, particularly when I passed a church or graveyard, or heard the bell ring. These things would then sometimes strike upon my heart, and lead me to think of death, and the unknown realities beyond. But these reflections were painful: they filled me with melancholy forebodings, and to escape from them, I sought to have my whole attention engrossed by my business; and this proved but too successful an expedient in banishing them."

It was while living in this state of alienation and forgetfulness of God, that a circumstance, which at the time appeared trifling, involved this family in irrecoverable disaster. One day being employed in putting a slate roof on a house, the weather became unfavourable. A drizzling rain came on, and rendered it imprudent and unsafe for him to continue at his business. But being anxious to fulfil his engagement, he continued his work, not regarding his situation, which was directly under the projecting eaves of an adjoining building. The constant dripping from this wet him through and through; and that very night he had a vio-

Attack of palsy.

Rebellious feeling.

lent attack of palsy. He was completely benumbed, unable to move, and confined to his bed for many months. Days of suffering and nights of weariness were then appointed him; but no cheering prospect—no whisper of mercy came to pour its consoling balm into his bosom, because he turned away from the only one who could have relieved him—the *Physician of souls*. When he had so far recovered as to be able to sit up, he was urged to try the country air. He accordingly removed with his family to Newark, where they remained some year and a half. But not deriving the anticipated benefit from this change of residence, and feeling lonely and desolate among strangers, he with his family returned to the city. By this time their money was expended. Indeed, before this, they had been obliged to part with some of their furniture to bear their expenses. This they continued to do until all was gone. Even their clothing went to procure food.

Mr. Lewson at length recovered sufficient strength to walk with difficulty. About this time a gentleman, compassionating his forlorn condition, presented him with a quantity of little books and tracts. He carried these about the streets in a basket, offering them for sale. He would in this way get a sixpence or more in the course of the forenoon, and thus made out to subsist without being reduced to the necessity of begging. In a short time, however, another paralytic attack unfitted him for this, or any other employment.

All this time, so far from looking up to God for comfort, his heart was full of rebellion, and constantly inclined to murmur at the divine dealings. "I do not see," he would say, "why I am thus severely dealt with. Certainly I am quite as good as my neighbours. I have never injured any one. I have always done my duty. I am sure I have never done any thing to merit such punishment as this."

When at length his wife was able to procure work, and he saw her toiling night and day to earn bread for himself and children, all the feelings of his nature were stirred

Mercy of God.

Kind friends.

within him, and he shed bitter tears over what he called their hard lot.

But all this bitter trial was necessary to subdue and soften his heart. The Lord even now was looking upon him in kindness. He raised up for this family a kind friend in Miss H——, who was untiring in her efforts to procure relief for them. But for her assiduous attention, and persevering importunity among her friends, this family must have suffered and perhaps perished during several long and severe winters. They were absolutely without food, fuel, or clothing, save what came to them through this channel. The Lord, however, was overruling all this. In her benevolent efforts for this family, Miss H—— communicated the story of their sufferings to Miss T——, a young lady whose heart, imbued with the love of Jesus, was prepared to be touched with sympathy for the sufferings of her fellow men, and ardently bent upon relieving them. Divine Providence had conferred upon her many and signal blessings. She belonged to a family of wealth and influence. She had the entire control of her time, and ample pecuniary means to relieve the necessitous and distressed. Though young, accomplished, and interesting, she sought not her happiness in the circles of fashion and gayety, but in the hovels of the poor, where, like a ministering angel, she went from cellar to cellar, on an errand of mercy, imparting relief and comfort to the children of wretchedness and wo.

But it was to the souls of her fellow beings that she chiefly sought to do good. And the judgment hour alone will reveal the multitude that through her kind instrumentality were turned from the darkness of sin to the light of God's glorious truth. No sooner was Miss T—— made acquainted with the situation and circumstances of this family, than she took them under her especial care and superintendence. While from week to week she sought to relieve their bodily wants, she sought still more earnestly to bring spiritual relief to their souls. She told them of the blessed Comforter—of Jesus the friend of sinners, and of

Christian solicitude.Long walk.

the bread which cometh down from above. Her sensibilities were all awake in their behalf. At length, after having some time sought to lead them to Christ, she came to her pastor to go and visit this family. At this time they lived in a remote part of the town. I have never, however, since regretted the long walk I was obliged to take to see this family, nor the occasion which first brought me acquainted with them.

Miss T——'s first acquaintance with Mr. L——.

CHAPTER II.

DIVINE RENEWAL.

.....“For what was call’d
Affliction brought an evidence of love.
It came disguised in sorrow’s livery,
But it threw off her borrowed garb, and lo !
The white rob’d angel of celestial love,
With her sweet influence was there. She still’d
His troubled thoughts, open’d his blinded heart,
And led him out beyond the changing earth;
And pointed up to the eternal Mind,
That taketh knowledge of a sparrow’s fall,
And lights a world with glory ; that will hear
A sigh’s low music ’mid the swelling praise
Which rushes upward from a thousand realms.”

PREVIOUS to my giving an account of my first interview with this family, I will transcribe a part of a letter which I received from Miss T——, in answer to some inquiries I had made in reference to them.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I rejoice that the thought suggested in your note has been put into your heart, and I am equally glad of the request you made of me ; for, although I can add but very little, if any, to the stock of information you already possess on this subject, yet I am conscious that the recollection of the Lord’s dealings with that family will be very beneficial to my own soul. And I should probably never have traced the leadings of Providence in this instance, had I not been in this way called to it.

It was a comfortless afternoon in the winter of 1825. The snow was falling fast, when Miss H—— called for me to visit, with her, a poor family, who had lately come under her notice. We found them in a dark, damp cellar in Wash-

Extreme poverty.

ington-street, in the most deplorable state. Mr. Lewson was lying on the bed, with his back towards us; nor did he notice us at all. It seemed as if he wanted to hide himself from human sight. Never before had I witnessed such absolute poverty, (since then I have), nor ever seen such despair and wo depicted upon any countenance as on that of Mrs. L——. The tears flowed without intermission, while, with great modesty, she made known their destitute situation. And the feeling of her heart was, though but half expressed, '*We shall never have comfort more.*' And alas, she had no bright inheritance to which she could direct the eye of faith in a world to come. In her I saw literally fulfilled, the melancholy state of those described by the apostle, 'having no hope, and without God in the world.' I have often been led to contrast their wretchedness and despondency at this time with the cleanliness, neatness, and comfort which marked their little room at our last interview with them, and I could not but remark with the young cottager, 'Blest religion, by which we live with comfort, as well as with comfort die.'"

I have introduced this extract to give the reader some faint idea of the abject misery to which this family were now reduced. It was more than three years subsequent to the date adverted to in this letter, when I paid my first visit to them. Their condition was somewhat improved; but when it is recollected, that they subsisted entirely upon charity, it will excite no surprise when I say that every thing around them indicated extreme poverty. Mr. Lewson was now rather more comfortable, and through the unwearyed efforts of the two benevolent females whom I have mentioned, had begun to consider his own ways, and the meaning of God's dealings with him. He said but little, though he listened attentively to the conversation I addressed to him. It seemed as though his heart had just begun to relent and soften, though there was evidently much rebellion and darkness in it still.

I endeavoured to impress upon his mind the solemn conviction, that all his afflictions had come from God—that the Almighty was taking this method to save his soul—that, therefore, in this series of calamities that had overtaken him, God had manifested far more kindness, than if he had allowed him to glide on smoothly down the stream of prosperity ; but that these afflictions, so far from doing him any good, would only increase his guilt, and deepen his eternal damnation, if he was not led by them to throw down the weapons of his rebellion, and surrender himself into the hands of God.

I assured him that as long as he continued to dictate, and murmur, and find fault, the hand of God would continue to lie heavy upon him—that he must submit, and be willing that God should reign, and dispose of all things according to the counsel of his own will—that if he would only open his eyes upon his own sinfulness, and be humbled under the view of it—if he would only fly to the foot of the cross, and fix the streaming eye of faith and penitence upon the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, peace and comfort would dawn upon his troubled soul !

To these words he listened with great attention and with evident symptoms of feeling. After looking up to the eternal throne, in prayer, for a divine blessing, I took my leave. This, like a hundred other families whom I had occasionally visited, was not under my parochial care ; and as my time was completely occupied with the duties of my own charge, several months passed away before I heard any thing more of them. My young friend, who watched over this family from week to week, and hailed with delight every indication of seriousness, thus writes in reference to the effect of that first visit, and the early steps by which Mr. Lewson's mind was led to lay hold of the things of eternity.

“ That was a very memorable era in the history of their religious experience, when the minister of the Lord Jesus

The workings of the Holy Spirit.

first visited them, and warned them of their danger while impenitent, and in a pointed manner set before them their duty. That first conversation, sir, you are best acquainted with. I know nothing of it except from its results. He became from that time more serious and thoughtful. He began to read his Bible and to pray. Previous to this he had met with a hymn beginning,

‘And must this body die?’

which took a hold on his mind, and occasioned him some anxious thoughts. This paved the way for his ready reception of your advice. He seemed to feel that he was laid by from work, and had this time allowed him, that he might have opportunity to seek the salvation of his soul. As soon as he was made sensible of this, he set about the work in good earnest. Aided by the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, he soon was made sensible of his lost condition as a sinner. The more he searched the Scriptures to discover the will of God, the more he saw he had broken his law. Thus a deep conviction of guilt fastened upon his mind. He saw himself justly exposed to eternal punishment: and not understanding the glorious plan of salvation through free grace, he almost gave up all hope of heaven. For nine months he remained in this wretched state. Gradually his attention was turned to the sufferings and death of Christ, as an atonement for sin. This Saviour was now the desire of his heart. To him his longing eyes were turned, and he gave himself up to an eager pursuit of him.

“And, said he, subsequently speaking of the divine dealings with him at this time—‘The Lord gave me such a view of the all-sufficiency of his sacrifice, that I thought if I could only have one drop of that precious blood applied to me, it would wash away all my sin, and I should then be happy.’

“As he continued diligently to read the word of God with earnest prayer for divine illumination and guidance,

Happy change.

his knowledge increased, his faith was strengthened, and a light shone upon the path that led him to the Lamb. The gloom and darkness which had overshadowed him, vanished. Hope sprung up, and he began to lean more and more upon the divine promises, till one day, in reading the tract, "*Do you want a friend?*" he was enabled to embrace the Lord Jesus fully as the friend of his soul, as his advocate with the Father; and venturing upon his faithfulness, confiding in his promises, he cast himself, as one guilty and perishing, at his feet, and was filled with joy and peace in believing.

"Great indeed was the change now wrought. His very countenance indicated the emotions of his soul, for it was peaceful and happy, glowing with gratitude and love, while deep humility marked his whole deportment, and devout thanksgiving dwelt upon his tongue. 'Praised be the Lord,' said he, 'for his great goodness. O, I am not worthy of this mercy. But he hath not dealt with me according to my sins. No. He has remembered mercy. Though he was angry with me, his anger is turned away. And through the blessed Saviour I am now enabled to look up to him, as my reconciled Father. O! I will always speak well of his name.'

"Some days after this he remarked, 'Now I see how it was—I have been wandering in the paths that lead to eternal death. In the time of my prosperity I forgot the Lord. While I could attend to my business, I gave my *whole attention* to it. While I could enjoy the world, I endeavoured to satisfy myself with it. And I should have gone on in this course, and perished for ever, had not my heavenly Father in great love sent this heavy affliction. O! I regard this sickness, and the destitution and wretchedness consequent upon it, as the greatest blessings of my life. For they have been the means of bringing me to the knowledge of myself. And, like the prodigal, I have now come back, and instead of seeking the riches of earth, my only aim henceforth shall be to lay up treasure in heaven.' "

CHAPTER III.

COVENANT DEDICATION.

"'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
Deign, gracious Lord, to make me thine;
Help me, through grace, to follow on,
Glad to confess thy voice divine.

"High heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renew'd shall daily hear,
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear."

WHEN the Spirit of God has brought a sinner to a knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, that individual cannot be at ease or inactive. He will continually present himself before the divine throne, with the inquiry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and whatever path of duty is indicated, he will cheerfully enter upon it.

Shortly after this decided change wrought in Mr. Lewson, a tract on the subject of baptism was put into his hands. As he had not received baptism in infancy, this tract suggested matter for serious consideration. He determined to examine the subject by the light of God's word. His earnest desire was to know and follow the will of the Lord in this and every other matter. In communicating his views, after this examination, to a friend one morning, he said, "I have no farther doubts on this point. In the Scriptures of truth, I read, that the Lord Jesus, in sending out the first preachers of the gospel, said, 'Go ye, and teach all nations, *baptizing them.*' When the apostles began to preach, 'they that heard the word, and believed, *were baptized.*' And O, how interesting is the eunuch's

Baptism.

Appearance of the Paralytic.

baptism by Philip ! I see plainly it is my duty to confess Christ in this holy ordinance, and I shall account it a great privilege to be thus admitted into Christ's visible church. And most gladly will I dedicate my children to him in this holy rite."

From the time of his forming this resolution, he applied himself to the work of self-examination. He faithfully searched the ground of his heart, and earnestly prayed that the grace of God might accompany this sacrament : for he wished not only to receive the washing of water, but also " the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

About this time I again visited him. He appeared like another man, so marked and manifest was the change, in the whole train of his thinking, and the whole style of his conversation.

There was now one striking feature in his character, which I have often observed in cases of genuine conversion. He had become like a little child. His ear was open to instruction, and he was willing to do every thing which God required.

The duty and privilege of baptism having been explained, a day was appointed for the administration of that holy ordinance.

I have witnessed so many such scenes, that when I undertook to recall this, there were no vivid impressions of it upon my mind, save the appearance of the unsteady, shaking frame of the poor paralytic, as he attempted to kneel down to receive the baptismal waters. There was something inexpressibly tender and touching in that appearance. At the time it reminded me of those who had the palsy, that came to the feet of Jesus, and were healed. This quaking, unsteady movement of the kneeling paralytic was all I could remember. I therefore applied to the friend whose pen has already furnished several of the preceding sketches in relation to this family, for her recollections of the scene. And I shall finish this account of the baptism by the insertion of the answer that I received.

Preparations for baptism.

“DEAR SIR,—I will endeavour to comply with your request, in relation to the baptism of Mr. L——, so far as to recall, by the mention of a circumstance or two, the scene to your mind.

“You will recollect that the day appointed for the administration of this ordinance proved to be cloudy and wet, on which account the family, not expecting us, were scattered. Upon our arrival the eldest boy was sent after his little sister. She came home crying from disappointment, that her visit at some neighbouring house should have been so suddenly and unexpectedly interrupted. You called the child to you, and asked her,

“‘Is it not better, my dear, for you to receive a blessing from heaven, and be dedicated to God, who alone can make you truly happy, than to have spent the whole day in play?’

“This soothed her instantly. You then said,

“‘Do you not want to be a good girl, and be made the child of God, and learn to love him?’

“She softly answered, ‘Yes, sir,’ then quietly took her seat. By this time the babe had been washed and dressed, the water prepared, and Miss H—— had arrived.

“During these preparations Mr. L—— sat very silent, apparently engaged in deep inward reflection and prayer. Indeed his whole behaviour throughout was marked with an air of great solemnity, as though he really felt that he was engaged in a transaction with the Most High.

“All things being arranged, the door was closed, and we waited for the solemn service to begin. Methinks I have it all before me as clearly as then, and my heart even now thrills with emotion, as I view the scene. There, secluded from the world—retired from the busy pursuits of men, the soul was made to come closely in contact with religion, and to feel its solemn reality. While in view of the holy ordinance about to be administered, I could not but adore that matchless wisdom which devised the mighty plan of man’s recovery; and the exceeding riches of that grace, which had thus provided a way for the return of the wanderer,

The baptismal vow.

by which he could now be adopted into that family of God from which he had been an outcast, and restored to all the privileges of his dear child.

“While indulging in this train of thoughts, the minister commenced, and proceeded without interruption. When the first question was put,

“‘Dost thou renounce the devil, and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh; so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them,’ instead of a simple assent which was all that I expected from Mr. L——, I was delighted to hear him repeat in a subdued, but a very resolute tone,—

“‘I renounce them all, and by God’s help will endeavour not to follow nor be led by them.’

“When required to answer to the following,

“‘Wilt thou then obediently keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?’—he closed his eyes, as if imploring strength from above for the fulfilment of this mighty requirement, then firmly replied—

“‘*I will, by God’s help.*’

“O how fervently did we all join in the petitions which followed, especially ‘that the old man might be buried—that all sinful affections might die in them, and that they might have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph’ over all their spiritual enemies. When the water was poured on his forehead in that holy name, and he declared a member of Christ’s church, the humility, penitence, and self-abasement which characterized his whole deportment, and were visible in his countenance, indicated more truly and eloquently than words, the real state of his feelings.

“Then the children, one, and another, and another came up to the table to receive the sprinkling, and the sign of the cross: and last the little babe was taken from his mother’s arms and presented to the Saviour, and enlisted

Glorified infant.Happy family.

under his banner. That little one has been spared all conflict! It has taken its flight before us, while we must fight our way after. Mrs. L—— you know was deeply affected, and wept all the time.

“As I witnessed these things I was forcibly reminded of the days of primitive Christianity, and of the first institution of baptism. I thought especially of the circle also around the apostle Paul on that memorable night, when the jailer, having heard the truth, believed and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway. O how many such sights must have delighted the eyes and encouraged the hearts of the first heralds of the gospel, when parents converted from heathenism gave themselves and their offspring to God! This family was as striking an instance of conversion as those of old, for Mr. L—— was literally a heathen, his mind being wrapped in pagan darkness.

“At the close of the service, the minister earnestly commended them to the care and guidance of heaven, and implored that they might be enabled to walk steadfastly in that Christian course they had now commenced.

“We left them happy—happy in God. And as we returned, I could not but reflect on that long chain of providences which had at length produced such blessed results.

“Yours, &c.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE EMBLEMS OF MERCY.

“And are we now brought near to God,
Who once at distance stood?
And to effect this glorious change,
Did Jesus shed his blood?”

AFTER Mr. Lewson received the ordinance of baptism, I visited him as often as my engagements would permit, and from time to time put such books into his hands as I thought would be useful to him. From all that I could discover, I felt satisfied that he was growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There was one subject, however, upon which his mind was greatly exercised; and in reference to which he was considerably agitated, until he was enabled to look at it in the light of God's truth, and then his mind again settled down into a holy calm.

I can in no way better present this subject before the reader, than by here introducing an extract from a letter, from the same pen which has already furnished us with several interesting sketches.

“I never knew a person who regarded the Lord's supper with such reverence and holy awe as Mr. L——. He had such a sense of the responsibilities resting upon those who became partakers of it, as well as the qualifications they should possess before approaching it, that when the proposal was made to him, he shrunk instinctively from it, thinking himself utterly unworthy of so high and sacred

Erroneous conceptions.

an ordinance. 'I dare not make so bold an approach to the holy Lord God as that,' said he, 'lest I should incur his displeasure by my presumption.'

"You know upon what his difficulty here was founded, and by throwing light upon that, you removed every scruple. After his conversation with you, he told me, 'That was a barrier which stopped my way completely. It was like a wall which I could not pass. But when I was taught to understand it aright, it seemed as if a mountain had been removed from my mind, and the way was clear for me to go forward.'"

The difficulty adverted to in this letter, and which existed in Mr. L——'s mind, arose from several erroneous views which he was cherishing. He was looking too much to the work of grace within him for sources of comfort, and not enough to the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. He had embraced the idea that no one should go to the table of the Lord, that had not arrived at *great* attainments in holiness—that in partaking of those holy symbols, we declared that we verily had *an undoubted assurance* of our acceptance and final salvation. He found within him still, evil propensities and the remains of a corrupt nature, and thought that until these were completely extirpated he had no right to think of drawing near to that holy feast. He was informed, that one great design of this institution was to fix the believer's gaze more intensely on Christ, to prompt him to give himself up unreservedly into his hands; and also that it was a channel which the Holy Spirit would employ to convey light, and strength, and comfort to the feeble, and those who were just starting in the way of life. In short, that the Lord's supper was one of the appointed means of grace, in which the humble and contrite sinner was to draw near to God, and in which God had promised to draw nigh to him; that the most devoted followers of Christ did not presume to approach that table, trusting in their own righteousness, or feeling that they had any thing in themselves upon which to rely—that the most devoted followers of

Christ, on every communion season, deeply felt that they were "not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs that fell from that table"—but yet they saw they must go to Christ, or perish everlastingly. In that holy ordinance they saw most affectingly exhibited a finished salvation, in the broken and bleeding body of their Redeemer. And they went to that table to cast themselves upon his infinite sacrifice, and to declare that they had no dependance upon any thing but that precious blood, for their acceptance. He was told that the true believer drew near that table to testify his gratitude and love to the Saviour for his mercy ; and that he received the symbols of that broken and bleeding body, as an expression on the part of Christ of pardon and acceptance. It was these considerations that relieved his mind and opened to him the path of duty.

"Still," continues Miss T—— in her communication on this subject—"Still from week to week he delayed. One day—surely I can never forget it—with an overflowing heart and eyes sparkling with joy, he said 'now I have nothing more to wait for. I have been long praying that I might be able to say, *as for me and my house we will serve the Lord*. These prayers have been heard and answered ; for my dear wife has come to him, devoted herself to his service, and desires with me, to seal her vows at this holy feast.'

"I turned to her. She instantly burst into tears, saying, 'O, how stupid have I hitherto been. I am astonished at the forbearance of God. How long has he borne with my rebellion ? I am ashamed and confounded when I think that my whole life has been wasted, while I have been standing unconcerned upon the brink of ruin. But now my eyes are opened. My heart has been touched—my one purpose from this time shall be to become a partaker of that precious faith which my husband enjoys.'

"Notwithstanding this family had had so many proofs of the vanity and emptiness of the world, Mrs. L—— had not till now been completely disenchanted of the delusions and dreams of fancy. Even amid their greatest des-

Scene in a basement story.

titution and depression, novels had constituted the only class of books that she had looked into with pleasure.

“ But the decided piety, the changed and chastened conduct, conversation, and example of her husband, made an impression upon her mind. Religious books were put into her hands by friends, to whom she felt so deeply obligated that she could not decline reading them. These exerted a most salutary influence. ‘ And now,’ she remarked, ‘ for a considerable time I have not indulged in reading my favourite authors. Indeed, they appear so insipid and trifling I wonder how I could ever have enjoyed them. Praised be the name of the Lord that nobler pursuits, holy purposes, and heavenly hopes have fixed my mind.’

“ The transactions of that memorable evening I leave, only remarking, that I never partook of that holy supper more to my comfort—never before enjoyed such near communion with the blessed Saviour, or was so sensible of his exceeding great love to me and all the world as then.”

The hour appointed for this holy ordinance was at the close of the day, just before the setting of the sun. It was during the summer months, and the day proved to be very warm and sultry. In company with two or three members of the church, we proceeded to Mr. L——’s lowly abode. He was not able to visit the sanctuary of God, and there was no prospect that he ever would be. There was, therefore, a propriety in celebrating this holy supper in his habitation. The tenement he occupied was a cellar, or low basement room in Oak-street. The principal room, and the one where we were now assembled, was almost in the street, and was used as a sugar and toy store. The weather was so hot, that the windows had necessarily to be raised; and in the street, gazing upon us, and hallooing, were troops of ragged children, from whom we could in no way be protected. For though a curtain was hung up at the windows, they did not hesitate to raise it up ever and anon, to see what was passing within.

Divine communion.

Feeble in health, debilitated under the influence of the heat, and exposed to this most annoying rudeness, I expected but little comfort; but seldom did a communion appear more solemn, or my enjoyment rise higher than on the present occasion. The manner in which my friend closed her account of this subject prompted me to request a more particular description of the impression made upon her mind by the solemnities of this occasion. Without attempting to convey an idea of the appearance which this family presented at this interesting moment, I will simply here insert an extract from the reply I received to my request.

“The day appointed for the Lord’s supper was favourable. When we arrived all things were in readiness. The little room wore on that occasion an aspect of unwonted order and cleanliness. All was neat and tidy. We proceeded immediately to the service. But really, sir, I was so taken up with my own feelings—my attention was so completely absorbed by what was passing in my own breast, and by holy intercourse with God, that I noticed nothing scarcely around me, and am, therefore, altogether incompetent to describe this solemnity; or if I should say any thing, I fear it would appear exaggerated; for to me all was pure, all was holy, all was full of God and heaven. The blessed Saviour welcomed us to that feast of love. He presided there. He made his presence to be felt by every waiting heart before him. He refreshed our hungry souls with the bread of life: for he imparted from his own fulness, grace, light, love, joy, peace, purity, yes, all the blessings that he, by his precious blood-shedding, has obtained for us. That was exalted communion indeed, when his voice whispered to the soul, ‘Thou art mine henceforth. I have purified thee unto me as a peculiar one. Thou art the purchase of my cross. Now return to me that love which is my due.’ O gracious words! and I trust every one replied, ‘Dear Saviour, *take my poor heart, and let it be for ever closed to all but thee.*’ Amen.”

God leads by a way which we know not.

CHAPTER V.

RESULT OF DIVINE CHASTENING.

“ I love thy chast’nings, O my God,
They fix my hopes on thine abode ;
Where, in thy presence fully blest,
Thy stricken saints for ever rest.”

IN the subsequent history of this family we shall find a happy illustration of the meaning and truth of that declaration of the prophet,—“ They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.” Their onward course in the way everlasting was vigorous and untiring. Seldom have I seen, in any family, a happier or more striking development of all the graces of the Christian character. Mr. and Mrs. Lewson seemed constantly to cherish and cultivate a meek, and subdued, and holy spirit. Though still surrounded by all the evils of poverty—and Mr. L—— still found that he could do nothing to contribute to the support of his family—they bowed submissively to the will of Heaven, and appeared uniformly cheerful and happy. When reduced to the greatest straits, then they trusted most in God, and found, by happy experience, that he was able to do what he had promised.

After the occurrences mentioned in the preceding pages, Mr. L—— one day remarked to one who was conversing with him :—“ In looking back on my past life I am lost in an overwhelming sense of the Lord’s wisdom and holiness. What I once repined at I now rejoice in. He has led me by a way which I knew not. He dried up the

streams of earthly enjoyment, *every one*, that I might seek my happiness in *him alone*. Though we have suffered in various ways, from want, care, and fear, what no one of our friends have an idea of, I see it has all been for my good and the good of my family. And I speak the language of my heart when I thankfully acknowledge *that goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life*. I cannot express how grateful I feel to the Lord for all his past dealings. I would not have any thing altered."

We are sometimes disposed to acknowledge the mercy and goodness of God in past afflictions, and yet our hearts would be found rebellious, if present afflictions were laid upon us. But it seemed to be the divine purpose to keep this family in the furnace, that they might not wander a single step from God. It was intimated in a former chapter, that the little babe that was taken from his mother's arms, and presented to the Saviour in the holy rite of baptism, had taken his flight to the eternal world. I was absent from the city at the time of this occurrence. An extract from a letter, adverting to this circumstance, will corroborate the statement before made in relation to the evident advancement that Mr. L—— was now making in the divine life.

"When I entered the house on Monday, Mrs. L—— came up to me, pressed my hand, and then turned away and wept bitterly. I looked at Mr. L——, who soon replied, 'We have lost our little babe since we saw you. He died the Saturday of that week you left the city.' After describing all the circumstances of his sickness with that particularity and deep feeling which we naturally expect from a parent, I said, 'How did you feel when you saw the spirit of the child was fled?'

"'The Lord,' he replied, 'gave me sweet composure of soul, and entire resignation to the divine will. I followed him in thought to the realms of glory, and saw him admitted into the society of the redeemed. I am confident he is now before the throne, singing a new song to Him that

The cholera.

sitteth thereon, and to the Lamb. I rejoice that he has gone safely into rest before me. Some slight perception of the happiness upon which he has entered has removed all painful sensations at parting with him. O thanks be for ever ascribed to the Saviour, who has removed the sting of death, by bringing life and immortality to light.'

"Is not this the triumph of faith? This man has surely grown in grace constantly during the last few months. He has taken a firm, decided stand on the Lord's side. He appears like a deep, experimental, practical Christian. He is a bright living witness of the benefit of affliction. And the success which in this case crowned the efforts of those who sought to lead him to the Lord, should be a constant incentive to every one to deal faithfully with those to whom they have access."

When that fearful scourge which has desolated so many parts of the earth had, during the summer of 1832, emptied New York of more than half of its population, and converted that bustling city into a scene of comparative solitude, many families were left, not only to be the prey of that destroyer, but to contend with all the evils of utter destitution and want. And among this number was the family of poor Lewson. He was residing in a street and neighbourhood where this fatal disease made great and awful ravages. The last time that I ever met him was a few months after this dark cloud of death had passed over. I asked him what were his reflections in the midst of the mortality that surrounded him. I shall never forget the pathetic manner in which he depicted that awful scene.

"I could not get out of the house," said he, "and we had not the means of removing into the country, or of sustaining ourselves there, even if I had been able to walk. For a few days, after ten or twelve began to die each day right round us, things appeared gloomy. But when this dreadful mortality continued week after week, and they would come in and tell me that such an one was dead on this side of us, and such an one on that—and a third, and

Trust in God.

a fourth opposite us,—as I sat here and heard the groans all around us, and saw the hearse drive by every half hour, I thought, surely I and my family will not escape. We shall probably in the course of a few days be huddled together, with those now dying around us, in one common grave. For a few moments my heart sunk within me, and a cloud came over my soul. But then these words came into my mind—‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.’ And then all my fears quickly vanished.

“Several other passages also came into my mind which gave me great comfort. ‘When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.’ ‘He shall cover thee with his feathers; and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.’ After my mind had been directed to these promises I felt so resigned to the will of God, and such a confidence in his character, that I can truly say that I never was more cheerful or happy than I was during the whole season of the cholera. The Lord provided for all our wants, and literally fulfilled his promise in protecting us. Not one of the family had the least attack of that disease of which so many died.”

In the sketch that I have here attempted to draw, the reader may form some idea of the purposes and designs of the Divine Being in sending affliction upon the children of men. He may also see the happy result of those divine dispensations which at first put on a most terrific appearance, as though the great God of heaven had verily become

Concluding inference.

our implacable adversary. The reader may find it profitable to ponder these things ; and if he is treading through the deep waters—if calamity of any description has overtaken him—if sickness, or sorrow, or any blighting evil which “flesh is heir to,” is weighing down his spirits, and covering all his future pathway as with a dense and impenetrable cloud, I would say to him—“My friend, submit yourself to the mighty hand of God. Seek to know his will ; ask him to send out his light, and his truth, that they may guide and lead you to his holy hill. And in the end you will be able to add your testimony to that great company that have gone before you up the thorny steep to heaven, and say, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*”

THE WITHERED BRANCH REVIVED.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG CONVERT.

..... "Young and fair,
Pure as her sister lilies were,
Adorn'd with meekest maiden grace,
With every charm of soul and face,
That virtue's awful eye approves,
And fond affection dearly loves."

MONTGOMERY.

IN my early days, I used frequently to stroll through the garden of a friend, that was laid out upon the most extended plan, and kept with great neatness and care. There was within this enclosure such a variety of objects, and yet so tastefully disposed—such an assemblage of shrubs, and trees, and plants, and flowers—that one almost felt, as he passed along through this scene, that he was walking through the fabled Elysian fields. What added to the pleasure of a ramble over these grounds was, that ordinarily every thing around appeared calm and quiet; the garden being the property of a private individual, who designed it as a place of recreation merely for himself and his friends. It was delightful to go there, just as the day faded into twilight, and, amid the odour-bearing shrubs that stood thick around, to inhale the balmy breath of evening; or to tread those pleasant walks, just as the day dawned, when the commingled strains

The young peach tree.The broken limb.

of the feathered tribes sounded so melodiously, and the balmy breath of morning met the lungs with such grateful and invigorating influence.

In this garden there was a young peach tree, of a choice kind, that had been obtained with great expense and difficulty. It was now growing thriftily, and was the pride of the gardener, who daily watched it with great care. At length, upon the opening of spring, this favourite tree became covered with blossoms. As the season advanced, several beautiful peaches were seen hanging from one of its most luxuriant branches. These grew fair and large, and at length ripened into most delicious fruit.

On a certain occasion, about the time that these peaches attained maturity, a large party of gay and fashionable young people, the guests of the proprietor of these grounds, strolled through these shaded and flowery walks to regale themselves upon the fruit that on every hand met the eye, and to enjoy the beauty of the scene. The peaches on this favourite tree attracted some eye, and in an effort to obtain them, the branch on which they grew was torn down. Never shall I forget the appearance of the gardener, as I approached this tree the next morning. He stood, with sadness and perplexed anxiety depicted upon his countenance, looking at the drooping branch, which was still attached to its parent stock by the rind and a small portion of the woody substance. With great care he lifted up the limb, pressing it back to its proper place, and confining it there with bandages. But it did not avail. The leaves faded, and the whole branch, to all appearance, became withered. The gardener, however, did not give it over. He cut off a considerable portion of the withered limb, and continued to make applications to the remaining part to resuscitate it, till at length he succeeded in drawing forth the indications of vitality. The branch again put forth leaves, and by degrees became firmly and permanently attached to its native stock. A lesson of moral instruction was conveyed to my mind by the watchfulness and care,

Emma B——.

First religious impressions.

the anxiety and persevering effort of this gardener. I was reminded of what God was doing for the plants in his spiritual garden, and of the manner in which he revives the withered branches that sin tears down. This thought came up powerfully before my mind when, at a subsequent period, I was led to contemplate the facts which will be presented in the narrative that follows. The reader, as he proceeds, will therefore distinctly see the ground upon which this brief biographical sketch is denominated "**THE WITHERED BRANCH REVIVED.**"

Emma B—— was reared most tenderly by affectionate parents. She entered upon life a stranger to sorrow, and with a heart that looked for its happiness amid the gay scenes of earthly vanity. But God, who cared more for her than she did for herself, so ordered things, in his providence, that a message of salvation was brought effectually to her heart at that very period in life when the pleasures of the world appear most fascinating. There was brought to her mind such a view of the preciousness of Christ, that she was willing to relinquish all, to be permitted to sit at his feet. The instrumentality by which her attention was first arrested and fixed on divine things, was the preaching of an eminent servant of the Lord, who has since been removed, by the great Head of the church, from the charge of a single parish to a wider field of labour, where he continues to receive multiplied tokens that the work of the Lord is prospering in his hands.

The first time I met Emma B—— was at my ordinary Bible class. Her appearance was altogether prepossessing, and the facts communicated to me in relation to her case, enlisted in her behalf the warmest sympathies and holiest affections of my soul. Circumstances at this time had transpired to place her beyond the reach of the faithful ministrations of that much loved herald of the cross, who had been the instrument of calling her from darkness to light. The church, upon whose stated ministry her family had decided to attend, did not, at that time, enjoy those

Bible class.

Peculiar trials.

various weekly services, nor that direct evangelical preaching that had been so eminently blessed to her soul. It was with a desire to provide, in some increased degree, for her spiritual necessities, that she visited the lecture room of —— church, and through a friend, by whom she was introduced, expressed an earnest desire to connect herself with the Bible class of which the author then had the charge.

I have already said that Emma B——'s external appearance was exceedingly prepossessing. Seldom have I seen a more speaking face; and, in all her movements and attitudes, she seemed like one of nature's own gentlewomen. She was young, and beautiful, and brilliant; and yet there was something so soft, and chastened, and grave, and subdued in her manner, that the most superficial observer might have seen at a glance that she was one who had sat at Jesus' feet, and had "tasted of the powers of the world to come." The more information I obtained in relation to Emma, and the more I saw of her in the Bible class, the more deeply interested I became in her. I was told that her family were wealthy and fashionable people, and that the whole circle of her friends were devoted to gayety and pleasure, and regarded her as under the influence of delusion. It was also remarked that she had to resist, every day, unceasing importunity to mingle in the scenes and circles of fashion and gayety. Though her friends were so unwearied in their endeavours to inspire her with her former love of dress, and to draw her again to the dance and the theatre, she remained steadfast, and kept on, in the even tenor of her way, a plain, unadorned, meek, heavenly minded Christian.

This was the account that I received in relation to Emma B——. The opportunity that I had of conversing with her, though very limited, led me to believe, that she had indeed "seen Jesus," and that she was prepared to make any sacrifices to follow him. She was, however, still a young and inexperienced Christian; and from what has been already said, it is evident that she was surround-

Spiritual enjoyment.

ed by peculiar temptations. How she withstood these will be seen in the sequel. Emma was at no time under my pastoral care, any farther than what arose from the circumstance of her attending my Bible class; and, therefore, I had not that opportunity of imparting direct personal advice that I should have enjoyed had she been one of my own charge. She had, however, a number of Christian friends, who felt deeply interested in her, and sought by every means in their power to help her onward in the Christian race.

The advice and counsel of a pastor are valuable, and the encouragement of Christian friends is of great assistance in strengthening one in the pursuit of holiness; but, after all, it mainly depends upon ourselves whether we hold on our way. If we are faithful in looking to God, and are determined to flee the very appearance of evil, we shall be "kept by the power of his grace." Emma seemed in some degree to realize this. She spent much time in communion with God; and one hour of each day was religiously devoted to self-examination—and one day in each week to fasting and prayer. While pursuing this course, there was no declension in the fervour of her piety. She grew rapidly in grace, and was enabled oft-times to go up to the very top of the mount, and behold the most enrapturing displays of divine glory. Adverting to this period in her religious course, while on her death-bed, she remarked, "Then I cared for nothing but Christ. He was my all in all. I had none near me to enter into my feelings, and they were poured out in all their fervency to God. There were times when it seemed that my mortal frame could not endure that sense of his presence—that enjoyment of communion with him with which I was favoured."

The state of mind here described is such as has been enjoyed by many eminent Christians, who were entirely removed from the influence of enthusiasm. President Edwards, whose name is identified with the highest displays of human intellect, and whose admirable *Treatise upon the*

Early religious experience of president Edwards.

Affections, shows with what rigorous scrutiny he looked into every thing that might be resolved into animal excitement, remarks in relation to his own religious experience,—

“The sense I had of divine things would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart, an ardour of soul that I know not how to express.

“Not long after I began to experience these things, I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when that discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone in a solitary place in my father’s pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together: it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty—and also a majestic meekness—an awful sweetness—a high, and great, and holy gentleness.

“After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered—there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing—in the sun, moon, and stars—in the clouds and blue sky—in the grass, flowers, and trees—in the water, and all nature, which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance; and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full and ready to break, which often brought to my mind the words of the psalmist, ‘*My soul breaketh for the longing it hath.*’”

The gifted and amiable Cowper, whose mind was so

frequently under a cloud, had views of the divine goodness, when first brought to enjoy the light of God's reconciled countenance, which he thus describes: "Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have died with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport. I could only look up to heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. But the work of the Holy Spirit is best described in his own words: it is 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Thus was my heavenly Father in Christ Jesus pleased to give me the full assurance of faith, and out of a stony unbelieving heart to 'raise up a child unto Abraham.' How glad should I now have been to have spent every moment in prayer and thanksgiving! I lost no opportunity of repairing to a throne of grace, but flew to it with an earnestness irresistible and never to be satisfied. Could I help it? Could I do otherwise than love and rejoice in my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus? The Lord had enlarged my heart, and 'I ran in the way of his commandments.' For many succeeding weeks tears were ready to flow if I did but speak of the gospel, or mention the name of Jesus. To rejoice day and night was all my employment. Too happy to sleep much, I thought it was but lost time that was spent in slumber."

I will refer to one case more—that of David Brainerd, whose name, like that of Henry Martyn, is associated with all that is sacred and inspiring in the missionary enterprise. He remarks, "As I was walking in a dark thick grove, *unspeakable glory* seemed to open to the view and apprehension of my soul. I do not mean any *external* brightness, for I saw no such thing; nor do I intend any imagination of a body of light, somewhere in the third heaven, or any thing of that nature; but it was a new inward apprehension, or view that I had of God, such as I never had before, nor any thing which had the least resemblance to it. I stood still; wondered and admired! I knew that I never had seen before any thing comparable to it for excellency

The grand design of religion.

and beauty : it was widely different from all the conceptions that ever I had of God, or things divine. I had no particular apprehension of any one person in the Trinity, either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost ; but it appeared to be the *divine glory*. My soul *rejoiced with joy unspeakable* to see such a God, such a glorious Divine Being ; and I was inwardly pleased and satisfied, that he should be *God over all* for ever and ever. My soul was so captivated and delighted with the excellency, loveliness, greatness, and other perfections of God, that I was even swallowed up in him ; at least to that degree, that I had no thought (as I remember) at *first* about my own salvation, and scarcely reflected that there was such a creature as myself."

After reading such testimony from such witnesses, we shall not be disposed to set down to the account of a sickly or disordered imagination those displays of divine glory which shone at this time with such heavenly brightness upon Emma's view. An inmate of the same dwelling, who saw much of Emma at this time, has since remarked,—

"She seemed too holy for earth. Her thoughts were entirely given up to religion. She rose very early, and I never awoke that I did not find her either on her knees or with her Bible in her hand."

I cannot here refrain from making the passing comment upon the preceding remark, that the great mass of people have no adequate idea of the grand design of religion, or of what is necessarily implied by a public profession of Christianity. The idea often entertained, is—that if one makes the service of God the paramount object of life ; if he consecrates to him the best energies of his soul, and has it for his principal business to walk so as to please him ; finding his highest delight in prayer, and his greatest enjoyment in communion with God—that *he is too holy for earth*. There can be no greater mistake than this. This is what all Christians ought to be ; what God requires them to be ; and what they must be before this earth is

Emma in her flourishing and prosperous state.

renovated, and "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." There is no one thing that so retards the Redeemer's chariot, and keeps back the rising tide of millennial glory, as the low standard of Christian character which almost universally prevails. A spirit of worldliness and of apathy is the bane of the Christian church. Until Christians feel that it is their duty and privilege to keep up to the fervour of their first love,—that it will be their sin and condemnation to retrograde from that point—that, starting from that point, they must go on, abounding more and more in love to God and in desires after holiness,—they will never accomplish much for the glory of God in this sin-desolated world.

A Christian friend who had frequent opportunities of meeting Emma at this time thus speaks of her:—"She was indeed most lovely then, for she was filled with the love of God. The love of Christ—the love of a crucified and risen Saviour, was her constant joyous theme; and many happy hours did we spend together in admiring and adoring the riches of sovereign grace."

Emma, at this period in her Christian course, seemed "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." She seemed like a tree planted in the garden of the Lord, "like a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowy shroud, and of a high stature, whose top was among the thick boughs." The waters of life that flowed by her, and continually irrigated her roots, made her great. So that "her height became exalted above all the trees of the field; and her leaves were multiplied and her branches became long. Thus was she fair in her greatness, in the length of her branches: for her root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide her: the fir trees were not like her boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like her branches; not any tree in the garden of God was like unto her in her beauty." And is it possible that this tree, so fair, so beautiful, so luxuriant, will be broken down, and lie shivered

Deceitfulness of the human heart.

and strown upon the earth? Daniel in his visions witnessed something not unlike this. "I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven; he cried aloud, and said thus, *Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit.*" The prophet Jeremiah, having described the blessedness of him that trusts in the Lord under the following imagery,—“He shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit,”—immediately adds, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: *who can know it?*” This simple declaration is a key which will unlock every door of mystery in relation to any case of declension in piety.

Emma B—— appeared like a vigorous, healthful branch, united so firmly to the heavenly vine that nothing could separate her from it; but she carried within her a heart which, though in a measure subdued by the power of the Holy Spirit, was still *deceitful above all things*. And though no one who passed by and saw this flourishing branch, and beheld its luxuriant foliage and rich blossoms, would have anticipated that it would one day be broken almost off, and hang down withered and torn; yet so it was. This lovely young Christian, who at first made such rapid advances in the divine life, afterwards sadly declined, giving increased emphasis to the apostolic injunction, “Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

CHAPTER II.

THE SAD DECLINE.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.
From the fifteenth of John.

THEY who are placed under the most favourable circumstances for the cultivation of piety, are in great and constant danger, from the remaining corruptions of a depraved heart, and from the insidious and unsuspected adverse influences around them, of being drawn fatally aside from the narrow path. "The liveliest affections will abate and cool, if pains the most unremitted be not taken to keep them in constant and active exercise; and that love which might have burned with a pure and holy flame, if the oil which should have fed it had not been exhausted, will sink, and will die away till it is totally extinguished, if the supply be not constantly kept up. The graces and virtues of the Christian life, like plants of the rarest description, and requiring the tenderest culture, will inevitably grow languid and fall into decay, if not kept alive by the most strenuous exertion for their cultivation, and the most earnest application for those supplies of grace, which are to the pious heart, what the rain, the dew, and the sunshine of heaven are to the flowers of the field."*

Emma had to encounter temptations of a peculiar character. For some time she held on her way nobly; but ultimately her spiritual foes prevailed, and she was drawn into the snare of the devil, and for a while led captive by him.

* Dr. Bedell on Spiritual Declension, Sermons, vol. ii. p. 22.

Absence of Emma.

Change.

If this part of her history could be accurately unfolded, I doubt not it would be seen that among the earliest steps, in this downward course, was the relinquishment of the exercises of that hour formerly devoted to self-examination. When we begin to decline, we like to hide the fact from ourselves. Hence, though we continue to go through the form of self-examination, we do not do our work honestly. We are not willing to know the worst. We are not willing to have the wound probed, but wish to have it "healed slightly."

As has been already intimated, Emma was not placed under my pastoral care; and I therefore had not that opportunity of being made acquainted with her progress in the divine life that I might otherwise have enjoyed. About a year or eighteen months after my first acquaintance with her, she went on a visit to some distant friends, where she remained several months. After this, she came no more to the Bible class; nor to the evening lectures, which she frequently used to attend. The only information I could obtain, in answer to the inquiries that I made concerning her, was that she had been absent, and had returned in good health, and was attending — church. The state of her religious feelings was unknown. Amid the pressure of engagements, connected with the spiritual improvement of the people of my own charge, Emma B——, no longer seen at the Bible class, was lost sight of. Time passed on. A variety of events had transpired since I last saw Emma. I had entered upon a new and distant field of labour, and was entirely engrossed in professional engagements that, in multiplied forms, pressed upon me. My anxieties were all awake for the salvation of a people, many of whom now began to evince a deep interest in eternal things. It was not wonderful, therefore, that even the recollection of Emma B—— had almost faded from my memory.

But, incidentally, in a conversation with a stranger, Emma's name was mentioned. A long train of reminiscences were immediately called up. Again, I seemed to see the

Retrograde movement.

Sickness.

gentle and heavenly-minded Emma B——, as I had seen her when she first came and took her seat among the members of the Bible class, so meek, and humble, and subdued; so ardent in her attachment to Christ, and so unfaltering in her efforts to follow him. I had not heard one word about her fatal decline. But the individual who mentioned her name told me this sad story. Emma, she said, had gone back to all the follies of the world, and had long evinced an entire indifference to the things of religion. Recently she had been attacked with pulmonary affection, from which there was no probability of her recovery. My informant went on further to remark that there was great reason to fear that Emma was awfully unprepared to die; and that, unless something was done for her, she might go down to her grave in a state of fixed apathy.

God, however, who quickeneth the dead, had a purpose of eternal mercy connected with the very sickness which had now fallen with deathly blight upon her. Still, the information I had received pressed with such weight upon me that I felt constrained to write to one of her early Christian friends, then residing in the same city with her, describing her case, and begging her to go and visit the backsliding and dying Emma. In this matter my wish had been anticipated; for Miss T——, the person to whom I wrote, had already paid her several visits, which were not unblest. Emma's case seemed so sad, that I felt it my duty to address a few words directly to her, which I did in the following note:—

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The reception of this letter will probably be very unexpected to you. Some three or four years ago, while I was labouring to draw sinners unto Christ, Divine Providence placed you within the circle of my labours. From the first I felt a deep interest in your spiritual and eternal welfare. For some reason, that I do not now recollect, you were suddenly removed from the circle of my labours; and, though I often inquired

Letter from the author.

after you, I never met with any one that could give any very definite account of you. The recollection of Emma B—— was like a bright vision that had passed away; all that remained was, the remembrance that I had seen her sitting, like a meek and lovely child, at the feet of Jesus. The radiance of hope was upon her brow, and heavenly peace in her bosom. I did not expect to see her, or hear of her again, till I entered the fields of paradise, and began to revive, among the happy beings that traversed those fields, the acquaintanceships of earth. Then, among those that had washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb, I did hope to recognise my young sainted friend! Yesterday, unexpectedly, I heard your name mentioned. I eagerly inquired after you, and whether your “walk was close with God?” It was a friend that loved you—that loved your soul—of whom I inquired. O pardon me, when I inquire of you, “*Where art thou?*” The thought flashed upon my mind, I shall meet you in judgment, and perhaps I shall behold you for ever cast out. What will Christ say to you when he reminds you of his agonies and death? Be assured that I have written these lines in kindness, and to say, “prepare to meet thy God!” Do you feel prepared? Can you look back, with satisfaction, on the past? You have stood before the King Eternal, and solemnly dedicated yourself to his service; you called men and angels to witness—yea, God himself—that you renounced *the world*, the flesh, and the devil. How will that vow appear in a dying hour? O, *return, return* unto the Lord, before it be too late for ever.

I probably shall never see you until we meet at the judgment bar; but do allow me to hope that you will then appear at the right hand of the Son of man. I hope you will not mistake the motives that have led me to address this communication to you. May it prove to you the warning voice of God, and may his mercy in Christ pluck you as a brand from the burning.

Your affectionate friend,

J. A. C.

The causes that tended to bring about Emma's decline.

A friend of Emma's, who loved her tenderly, and saw with anguish her sad defection from the Lord, and who was privileged to act the part of a ministering angel in recalling her to the feet of Jesus, and helping her to prepare for her mortal hour, has kindly furnished me with materials from which I shall draw most of the facts that will be presented in the remainder of this sketch.

Miss H——, the friend just adverted to, having spoken of Emma's burning love for Christ, and her devotedness to his cause, remarks,—“From this beautiful picture of the fervour of her first love, it is painful to turn. Alas! that so bright a jewel should have ceased for a while to gem the Redeemer's crown. It is painful too to reflect upon the many hinderances that beset her; and when we consider the deceitfulness of sin, we cannot so much wonder that she fell, as that she thus long held on her way. Her struggle was not only with the mere rising corruptions of her own heart; but those to whom she was bound by every tie of love, sought, on the one hand, to prevent her strictness of devotion, and, on the other, to allure her back to gayety; and in the language of the psalmist, ‘No man cared for her soul.’ At home, none comprehended her feelings; abroad, none compassionated them. Not being attached to the church under the care of Mr. C——, nor yet able to attend it, she seemed to have no pastor. The clergyman upon whose ministry her family attended was, properly, the only person whom she had a right to look to, as sustaining to her the relation of a pastor. He had only a very general acquaintance with her. And often when she sought for Christian counsel and sympathy, the result was such that she felt mortified and disappointed. She had exalted views of the character of the Christian minister, nor did she enough consider that all are compassed with infirmity; when, therefore, the watchful care she had anticipated was not experienced, she felt in bitterness, ‘I have seen an end of all perfection.’

The interview.Illness.

“Circumstances continued to prevent her from enjoying the society of Christian friends, or the support of a Christian pastor, long before she had yielded to the wishes of those around her, to mingle more in the world from which she had so entirely withdrawn herself. Beset with snares on every hand, naturally of an affectionate disposition, she felt the want of human sympathies. Says one who then saw much of her, ‘We cannot believe that she joined the circles of her friends at first from any other than a desire to prove to them her willingness to please. Her first retrograde steps were such, as most would think not inconsistent. By degrees she entered into gayer scenes, and then soon became to all appearance a complete worldling.’

“Time passed on,” continues Miss H——. “I heard occasionally that she was the gayest of the gay. I often wondered whether she could be happy. I often longed to see her. It was strange that the first time I again saw Emma, we met as mourners in the house of mourning. We spoke of our bereavements, but it was as strangers speak. There was something in her manner that repulsed me, and it was with a vexed as well as sorrowing feeling that I bade her adieu. How little thought I then, that ere I laid aside the garments of wo, she would be with those who ‘stand before the throne in white robes, and having palms in their hands!’ How little, that it should be my privilege to watch the preparation of her spirit for its upward flight!

“Early in the fall of 1834, I was informed of her illness, and that her mind was in a very anxious and unhappy state. Accompanied by a friend, I sought admission to her, and was not denied. Never shall I forget the shock of the moment when she met us. I had merely thought of her as an invalid; but when I saw the seal of that fatal disease with which I had been sadly familiar, it was to me as the engraving of death. I dared not trust my voice to speak. Calling soon after, I found her unable to see me. The cir-

A fact adverted to.

cumstances of that morning were afterwards related to me. She had attempted to write to Mr. C——, but her strength had proved inadequate to the exertion, and a severe fainting fit followed.”

The fact adverted to in the conclusion of the last paragraph, and the peculiar state of Emma’s mind at this period, will be unfolded in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

SANCTIFIED SICKNESS.

There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again.

From the Book of Job.

THE Psalmist bears the following testimony in relation to the covenant protection which God extends to those who are truly his people: "*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*"

This is the only hope that any human creature can cherish of his finally reaching mount Zion with songs and everlasting joy—*though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.* Were it not for the hand of the Lord plucking us away from the downward path in spite of ourselves, we should not only wander from him every hour, but we should never return from our wanderings. What a blessed privilege—what an unspeakable mercy it is, that Israel's God is our keeper, and that he has said, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee! The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* Were we left to ourselves—were we not continually kept by the power of God's grace, not one of us would ever stand within the walls of the New Jerusalem. But the great Captain of our salvation, who has undertaken to conduct his chosen people to the everlasting possession of that heavenly rest which remaineth for the people of God, hath said, *I know my sheep, and they follow me; and I give unto them eter-*

The body destroyed to save the soul alive.

nal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. When God's people wander from him, he in covenant love smites them with his chastening rod ; and not unfrequently kills the body to save the soul alive.* It was thus that the Most High dealt with Emma B——, in bringing back the poor wanderer to the heavenly fold.

The reader will recollect that, at the conclusion of the last chapter, allusion was made to a great effort which Emma put forth to write a letter to Mr. C——, which resulted in a fainting fit, from which she did not recover for some time. The circumstances were these. After receiving the letter addressed to her by the author, of which notice has been taken, Emma felt a great desire to convey to one who had taken so deep an interest in her eternal welfare, the assurance that she appreciated his kindness, and was not unmindful of the awful retributions of that eternity to which she was so rapidly hastening. Having been for a considerable period a member of the author's Bible class, and during that period having availed herself of frequent opportunities of attending upon the ministrations of the sanctuary where he officiated, she looked back upon that portion of her history with deep emotion, and felt rising within her sentiments of kindness towards him, not unlike those that she would have cherished to one who had sustained to her the relation of a pastor ; and she wished to record, with her dying hand, her acknowledgment of gratitude to him, and her deep sense of her own guilt and vileness in the sight of God as a backslider. She had thrown together a few thoughts, and had commenced arranging and copying them ; but in the midst of the effort, the fainting, which we have noticed, ensued, and she was never able to accomplish what she had undertaken. After her decease, there was sent to the author what she had commenced preparing as a communication to him. It is in an unfinished state ; but as it

* Compare the 32d verse of the 11th chapter of the 1st Corinthians, with the 30th verse, in connexion with the context.

Emma's last letter.

is in her own handwriting, unfolding the sentiments of her own heart, it will be here inserted.

“DEAR SIR,—Your letter reached me just on the eve of my fulfilling that vow, on which I had so long and so shamefully trampled. *It* afforded me great pleasure, inasmuch as I felt grateful that you possessed the same interest for me that you ever had. But O! it grieved me that you, whom, in looking back upon former years, I may be permitted to address in one sense, as my beloved pastor, should have been made acquainted with my great fall; for I knew you would feel sincerely grieved, which is proved in your kind and admonitory letter. I am willing to bear the rebukes of my fellow Christians, to lose the good opinion of those I truly loved; but that I should have been the unhappy instrument, in the hand of Satan, to injure the cause of my blessed Saviour; that I should have encouraged scoffers and infidels, causes me to feel, when I kneel at the throne of grace, sorrow and shame which denies the utterance of words! In reviewing my past life, there is one thing which appears to cast a gleam of hope across its dark and gloomy prospect. Never did I forget my God. Daily have I kneeled at the throne of mercy, and prayed for forgiveness, and to be renewed unto repentance. I am convinced that my almighty Father, in the greatness of his mercy, did not suffer me to neglect him altogether, and graciously condescended to hear my prayer. For in the painful and fatal disease, which like a flash of lightning seized me in the midst of health and youth, I can see his hand snatching me from the abyss of ruin. Your letter gave me much comfort, wherein you urge me to repentance. There are several passages in the New Testament which have caused me a great deal of uneasiness. I allude to the fearful manner in which St. Paul speaks of apostasy. There are many young, professing Christians, who like myself have entered into the pleasures of this world, who yet have continued to kneel at the table of Christ. I could not pollute that table by going

Emma's view of her past life.

forward, when my life was so much at variance with the vow which I had taken when first I knelt there. I humbly ask you to consider these two cases. Is going to the communion table, and observing all the outward forms of religion—is this all that is necessary in leading a religious life? Ah, no! This is *not* the language of those pious counsels which you laboured so faithfully to impress upon our hearts. You would have said, ‘Come not forward, thou hypocrite, to profane this holy communion!’ It is useless for me to mention the many temptations which beset me even during my attendance at your church. The thought never entered into my heart that I should ever fall into those temptations; so I did not know my own weakness, nor the world’s allurements. I relied too much upon my own strength.

“My constant confinement to the house renders it impossible, on my part, to perform those works of love and faith which every true Christian finds so much pleasure in discharging. Slight experience has taught me how much pleasure is to be derived from visiting the poor. Those few visits I made with Miss T—— were of more benefit to me in teaching me humility, and to be grateful for the many blessings I enjoyed, than any other duty. I do not feel myself equal to the task of finishing this letter. The unexpected pleasure of receiving a letter from you afforded me so much gratification, that I determined to make an effort to answer it. That it *has been* an effort the above lines plainly show. If in reading them it should appear to you that I wished to justify myself, you will be mistaken. No earthly being but myself can know the enormity of my sins. To me it appears there is not one hour of those years of sin that is not remembered. Can I not say with a backslider like myself, ‘Have I not mingled in the festival? Have I not courted pleasure in the brilliant assembly and crowded theatre, where beauty and wealth poured around their shining and fascinating attractions?’ And this is not all; no eye but that of my God has looked into

Self-abasement.

The backslider's prayer.

my heart, and seen the vile and sinful thoughts that were there. How can I, when I consider these things, and then turn to the wonderful love of my blessed Saviour, how can I justify myself! O, no! would that I could feel, far more than I do, how great a sinner I have been. O! that you would pray for me that my sins may be forgiven; that the Holy Spirit may cleanse me from all impurity; and that, whether I live or die, I may overcome at the last. My earnest prayers shall ever be offered up for the happiness of yourself and family; and if, indeed, we never meet again this side the grave, I trust that Jesus will support me that I may meet you at his right hand."

She had, at this time, the benefit of the counsel of a spiritually minded pastor, who strove to direct all her contemplations heavenward. Doubtless his labours were eminently blessed in persuading her to return to the feet of that Redeemer whom she had so wickedly deserted. The unfinished letter, to which the reader's attention has just been called, shows that she now saw this matter in a true light.

It is an interesting and singular fact, that those who have once *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, when they wander from the narrow path, and live in known sin for which their conscience every hour rebukes them, seldom or ever become so hardened that they can make up their mind to live altogether without prayer. Their prayers under these circumstances must necessarily be heartless, and offered rather with a view to soothe conscience, than to obtain the blessings asked for. O, should God deal with impenitent sinners and backsliding Christians according to their desert, how soon would perdition open her mouth and swallow them up? It is because his compassions fail not that we are not consumed. Miss H——, who visited Emma frequently, remarks: "At this time her thoughts seemed fixed upon her own vileness, and to these sentiments, that dwelt constantly upon her mind, she gave utterance in conversation

Christ the way.Prayer.

with her friends. In such an humble, self-abased spirit, depressed with the sense of her sinfulness, constantly referring to her backsliding, dear Emma long continued."

Miss T——, whose name has been already referred to, visited Emma frequently at this time, and her visits were like refreshing showers in the summer's drought. Her conversation was full of instruction, and indicated to this strayed one the precise path she should take to return to the fold. She showed her that Christ was *the way*. And in prayer she seemed to bear her to the very bosom of Jesus, who came to seek and save them that are lost.

Miss H—— farther remarks in relation to Emma at this time, "Looking within, instead of turning her eye to the great sacrifice, and comparing her present state of coldness with the warmth of her former feelings, she found in the past only that which was calculated to awaken present doubt and fear.

" 'O,' said she, 'how clear and simple was once the way of salvation! Tell me, was there not in Mr. M—— a peculiar power of preaching Christ?'

" I replied, 'There was indeed, dear Emma. The way of justification by faith, as exhibited by him, was so plain, that *he who ran might read!*'

" 'It was even so,' she responded; 'but now, although I hear the words *I am the way*, I cannot seem to find it, and I fear at times I never shall. O, that I felt my sin more.'

"She seemed to be afraid to gather comfort, even from God's word, and when we would quote to her the promises to the penitent she would confront us with the doom of the apostate. Yet I never doubted that she would be received at last into the joy of her Lord, for she was too humbled, too repentant, long to remain unblessed. She looked to God much in prayer, though she complained of the want of evidence that her petitions were accepted. 'O! it used to be so easy to pray,' she said, 'my soul mounted to meet my God; but now, I feel at such a distance, it seems no longer prayer.' Hopes and fears now alternately shaded

Thoughts of death.

Sense of sin.

her mind, the desire of life, the possibility of recovering, the dread of death, all possessed her. She had a strong fear of the last struggle, and it was her frequent topic. 'You do not seem to dread it as I do,' she one day said. 'Ah! it is one thing to talk of it in health—ay, even to shadow forth its approach in imagination. I too have longed for death when wearied with the world, and I felt my affections strong in God; but when it comes stealing on—when we have time to invest it with all its terrors—when the soul is not assured of her eternal rest—it is dreadful to die! I cannot describe to you the utter desolation of my spirit, the morning that I fainted some weeks ago. I thought that I was dying, and that thought so filled my soul with horror that I could think of nothing else. I tell you,' she continued, with earnestness, 'that I once reasoned as you do; but when I think of my early youth, my days unmarked with outward trial, when I think,' she said, her eyes filling with tears, 'of the green fields, and the blue sky, and remember that I must see them no more, I am sad.'

"Upon my reminding her of the glory that is to be revealed, and the great sorrow of those who, dying later in life, leave many behind them to feel their loss, she replied, 'True, it is better for me to go. O! if I might say—I know that I shall enter into rest, all would be well.'

"Notwithstanding Emma's deep sense of sin, she seemed desirous to feel it still more. 'You talk to me,' she said, 'as if I could view it in a sufficiently awful light. How can I ever realize its vileness? I pray to feel it till my soul is weighed down with it; yes, even if it drove me to the verge of despair.'

"'O! not despair, Emma—your sins cannot exceed His goodness.'

"'God's goodness!' she repeated; 'O! the Lord has ever been good to me, I have been the child of his providence. He called me to Him, and gave me much, O! how much of the joy of his presence; and when I forsook him,

Triumphant deaths.

he led me to see all the nothingness of earth, and now he is showing me what a poor worm I am.'

"In answer to my wonder at her doubts, she replied, 'O! I do not doubt the Almighty's power—I do not doubt my Saviour's love, but I doubt myself. I fear to take too hastily, too presumptuously, to myself, words and promises which are not intended for me.'"

"Speaking of triumphant deaths, she asked—'Does it not seem strange to you that the dying hopes of very steadfast believers seem to be sometimes so clouded—and yet many, who on a sick bed first know the Lord, go rejoicing.'

"I referred to the first sense of pardoned sin, as in some measure accounting for it.

"'True,' she said, 'and then such have not yet experienced the deceitfulness of sin, and of their own hearts. They have not yet fallen into temptation. O there is something in this sense of backsliding that falls like a mountain's weight upon the spirit, and almost prevents it from so much as lifting up the eyes unto God.'

"I thought of the publican, and felt that she was already justified in the sight of Him who knoweth what is in man."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ISSUE.

I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish.

From the prophet Ezekiel.

As we advance in this narrative, we shall find increased evidence that God was smiting to the dust the youthful form of Emma that he might fit her soul to bloom in immortal freshness and beauty in the paradise above. It was only by the awful stroke which brought death to the mortal part that this withered branch could be revived. All that follows will show that the expiring flame of spiritual existence was now rekindled, and that the Holy Spirit was preparing her for an entrance into the eternal kingdom. I am not at all surprised, however, that Emma, in her last hours, was not favoured with any remarkable seasons of rapturous enjoyment. I should have been greatly surprised had she gone off very triumphant. I believe it is Cecil that remarks, that he never expected to witness the evidence of a calm and triumphant hope when called to visit a worldly minded Christian on his death-bed. In the very nature of things, there must be much darkness, in a dying hour, in that mind that has followed Christ "afar off," and been seeking all along its principal comforts from the world. This, we might expect, would be eminently the case where the professed follower of the Redeemer had fallen into open apostasy; and, though subsequently reclaimed, and humbled at the foot of the cross, it could not be expected, from God's usual mode of dealing with his

Payson's contemplation of death.

creatures, that such a one would enjoy extraordinary light or unclouded hope in passing through the shaded valley. Sufficient, for all the purposes of mercy, would it be, if the returning penitent received such tokens of pardoning love as would enable him to indulge a trembling hope of his acceptance, while he continued to lie prostrate at the foot of the cross in the attitude of a lost and perishing sinner.

It is only those who have long lived very near God—whose walk has been undeviatingly close with him—who can expect to go off with such language as this: “I can find no words to express my *happiness*. I seem to be swimming in a river of pleasure, which is carrying me onward to the great fountain. God is literally my all in all. If he is present with me, no want can in the least diminish my happiness; and were all the world at my feet, trying to administer to my comfort, they could not add one drop to the cup. The celestial city is now full in my view. Its glories beam upon me—its breezes fan me—its odours are wafted to me—its sounds strike upon my ears—and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death; and this appears but an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission.” Such was the language of the dying Payson—of one who had made it the great and unceasing business of his *whole* life to walk so as to please God. He had no hope but what was in Christ; and, in his mortal hour, Christ shone gloriously upon him.

The following record of Emma's last hours will show that her Lord, notwithstanding all her wanderings, dealt very graciously with her.

Her friend, Miss H——, having described the lowliness of her humility, and the depth of her self-abasement, remarks—“It was soon after this that she began to find joy in believing.

“‘I think,’ she said, with a solemn earnestness, when I inquired of her, ‘I may say, *thou Lord hast not cast me off for ever*. Yes, I do feel that God has heard my

Submission.

Worldly conformity.

prayer, and I am again his child. I grew weary of myself. I laid myself at the Saviour's feet, and peace dawned upon me.'

"I was not surprised when she told me this, for the twilight had been long brightening; and I knew that the rising of the Sun of righteousness must be near. From this time Emma seemed to grow in heavenly wisdom; but the peace of mind she experienced so changed her countenance that, for a while, the hope of her recovery animated her friends, and even affected herself. I think this uncertainty took much from her spiritual enjoyment. She could not think of life as if she could ever be called to enter upon its duties; nor yet did the prospect of her speedy deliverance from sin and death serve to fix her thoughts on the hereafter. She spoke much of what she trusted to be if she ever returned to the world. 'I hope,' she said, 'if I do, that I shall live more becoming my profession. But I would rather die as I am than live as I have done. O! not for worlds would I again forsake my God.'

"The severe weather now affected her bodily frame, and she was several times very ill; still her decay was so gradual, that no change would be noted during many weeks. Various were the subjects of our conversation during several subsequent visits. As in former days, we often spoke of Mr. —; but now she was the listener; she would delightfully hear the frequent accounts I was enabled to give her of the success of his labours. Referring to the kindnesses she had received from him in times past, she would prayerfully thank the Lord for the tidings I brought her, and looked to the possibility of his visiting New York with exceeding interest. Once or twice, we had long conversations on the subject of conformity to the world, particularly in dress. She strongly reprobated the idea of breaking down the 'middle wall of partition' which God had set between his children and the world; but said, she thought that extreme strictness in minutiae often injured the cause

Declining health.

of religion ; that she felt there was such a thing as going too far the other way, and thus obliging those around us to believe that religion was a thing incompatible with the enjoyment of even the common blessings which God has abundantly given us.

“As the winter advanced, her hold on life weakened, and, before the early spring, she appeared to feel that health was never to be hers. The prospect did not, as before, affect her sadly ; but her dread of the last struggle, and her anticipation of coming pain, seemed to increase. On asking her how she felt, one day, she replied, ‘I do not like to say, my *sufferings*. With Anzonetta* I can say, “My Saviour suffered ;” but my cough is violent, and I do experience *much* bodily pain ; still, it is the future I dread. I think I shall die very hard—do you not ?’

“I replied, ‘No. I think yours will be an easy death, and that you will fall gently asleep in the arms of Jesus. To him alone you must look.’

“On Sunday, the 26th of April, Emma appeared to sink rapidly ; her depression of spirits, and her fear of death, still continuing, she sent for Miss T——, believing that the enemy was near ; but on the morrow she revived, and partook of the communion at the hands of Dr. H——, then just returned from the south. She felt much strengthened, as well by his conversation as by the sacrament. I found her a day or two afterwards in a trusting spirit, but rather depressed, that as yet her prayers in reference to the removal of this dread of death were not answered. Gathering comfort to my own soul from the words of Scripture on this head, I spoke to her of the Saviour’s agony, and his evident shrinking ; and although we both felt the difference between the load of sin which he bore for us, and ours

* She referred here to ANZONETTA R. PETERS, who had given such wonderful evidence of divine support through a long sickness, and in her dying hour. The author has now in preparation an extended memoir of this young saint, a brief sketch of whom was drawn in the last chapter of “*The Pastor’s Testimony*.”

What have I done for God?View of heaven.

which we were directed to cast upon him, we acknowledged there was consolation in the thought.

“Job’s many prayers for life recurred to me. She said, ‘How often you quote from Job ; I know very little of that book. Indeed, I never thought that I could obtain so much encouragement from his experience as your present reference has given me. When I hear you so readily bring the words of Scripture to prove what you say, I wonder that I know so little of it.’

“Upon my remarking, that the vocation of a Sunday-school teacher brought it often to the memory, she answered with a sigh,

“‘Yes ; you have gone on in the way, so far at least as outward works, without ceasing ; but I, what have I done for God ? What shall I do ? Nothing, emphatically nothing.’

“‘Not so, Emma ; God is permitting you before you depart to glorify him in sickness. He is enabling you to be a preacher of righteousness to your family.’

“‘God grant me that blessing,’ she said, fervently ; ‘I do believe the Lord is beginning a good work in their hearts, and I have much faith that he will carry it on.’

“At her request I besought, for her, grace for a dying day. I felt that God was very present then, and I believe that Emma felt so too ; for she said, as I rose, with a look that seemed to pierce the very heavens, ‘Blessed prayer ! how near it brings us to God !’ There was a childlike simplicity in her manner, that reminded me of David’s words, ‘My soul is even as a weaned child.’ I wept ; she seemed distressed, and said,—

“‘You must not do so, and yet the Saviour’s eyes were bedewed with tears.’ A smile passed over her face as she continued, ‘You know I shall soon be happy ; come, look up, you often comfort me, I will comfort you ; there shall be no more tears where I am going.’ I did indeed look up, for I had seldom heard her speak with such assured faith. The half hour that followed was one of the happiest I

Hope of glory.

Paternal relation.

ever passed with Emma. Evidently she was ripening for glory.

“Anxious to know how she had been carried through her change of residence, I visited her the first Monday in May. It was a time never to be forgotten, for the same sweet spirit of childlike confidence and simplicity remained. The fear of dissolution was for the time removed, and she seemed to stand on the borders of the promised land. She had greatly feared that her death would occur before the removal of the family, and felt very grateful when it was the evident intention of her Lord to allow her to go through it with comfort. I found her sitting up near a window, from which a view of the river and the seminary was visible. She said, ‘Is not this beautiful? So like the country; yet do you know, instead of making me wish to stay, it only reminds me of the little step between me and everlasting life. I look up at the blue sky and think of Him who dwelleth beyond it, and it seems but a little way for the spirit to ascend.’ She talked constantly this afternoon. I remember it, not only because it was the last time she spoke above a whisper, but it was also the last time that her joy was cloudless. She spoke much of her parents, much of their love and care for her during her sickness. ‘I thank God for them besides,’ she said, ‘because they make me understand him better; my mother’s unceasing, anxious care, he tells me cannot compare with His. My father’s tenderness reminds me of my heavenly Father—all love, all compassion, and O reviving thought! all might! Yes, Lord, I do rejoice in thee as *my* Father!’ She dwelt long on this, tracing God’s dealings with her as an indulgent yet chastening parent, and then looked upward with such a glow of devotion, such an intensity of feeling depicted on her countenance, as I never saw equalled. Again she said, ‘I have been thinking of the words of the hymn, The Dying Christian to his Soul.

Hark! they whisper, angels say,
Sister spirit! come away;

Communion of saints.

and it seems to me almost that I hear the sound of their melodies, and the silver tone of that summons,

Sister spirit ! come away.

Sister spirit ! yes, I do feel that I shall soon go with those who call to me even now, *come away !* Descending as it were from this foretaste of heaven, she asked after Mr. C——, and expressed a strong desire to receive the communion when he came : mentioned Mr. P——, C——, and one or two others that she would like with her.

“ ‘O,’ she said, ‘it would be delightful in such fellowship to commune again ; most solemn, most profitable, I feel it would be.’ She then inquired particularly concerning the Sunday-school of St. ——, mentioning many of its former members, and expressing a prayerful desire for its spiritual prosperity. On the following Tuesday our beloved pastor, Mr. C——, arrived. I hastened to inform her, but found her too weak to bear the excitement of the administration of the communion. ‘My mother,’ she said, ‘I believe thinks my spirit may depart, and although to me it might be joy thus to exchange the communion of the visible for that of the invisible church, it would be very distressing to you all.’

“ When I next saw Emma she was unable to speak above a whisper, so that I could not take so much interest in her remarks, for she still continued to converse. She expressed much pleasure in having again seen Mr. C——, and then said, ‘Now that this my anxious desire has been gratified, now that I have seen my kind, watchful friend, I would also see Mr. M——. Do you think, if I live until his return, that he will come and see me ?’ ”

The interview, to which reference in the preceding remarks is made, was to me one of deep and solemn interest. Being again in the neighbourhood of Emma, and hearing that life still continued to linger in her emaciated frame, like the flickering blaze of an expiring wick in the wasted socket,

I felt an earnest desire to see her again before her final exit. I also learned that she had sent a very urgent request that I would not fail to pay her a visit. The only time at my disposal, which I purposed to devote to Emma, was Thursday afternoon. The weather was exceedingly unpropitious. The rain descended in torrents, threatening to overwhelm every thing with a flood. I did not, however, allow myself to be diverted from my purpose, but persevered in defiance of the storm, and found myself richly repaid for the effort which it had cost.

The emotions that thronged my bosom, as I entered the sick and dying chamber of Emma, I cannot describe. There was one thought, however, that combined itself with a scriptural expression, and made me exclaim to myself, '*Here is a brand plucked from the burning.*' Emma was reposing in an easy chair, and appeared exceedingly pale and thin. And yet there was the impress of all that was sweet and lovely upon her countenance still. A smile lit up her features, as though to welcome me, and yet in a moment it was chased away by a cloud that seemed to come with bitter remembrances over her pale, but still beautiful countenance. In our conversation I endeavoured to touch upon those points that I thought would be most useful to her in her present state of mind, and her present vicinity to the eternal world. She could converse but little. As I incidentally adverted to the past, her eyes filled with tears, and she said at intervals,—

“O, what a monument I am of the distinguishing grace of God! How had I wandered from him! How richly did I deserve to have been left to ‘eat the fruit of my own ways, and be filled with my own devices.’ But yet, after all, I hope he has had mercy on me, and restored me to his favour. Sometimes, in view of my ingratitude, my vileness, and my guilt, I am ready to think that mercy can never stoop so low as to take me out of this horrible pit into which I had fallen. But, as I continue to cry unto the Lord, and wait patiently

Peace in believing.

Presence of God.

Consumption.

on him, the light comes in upon my darkened mind; and I cannot but indulge the trembling hope, that the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse even my soul from all sin."

While this last thought was expressed, there played upon her features a smile, that gave to her whole countenance so sweet, and subdued, and heavenly a look that I could not but say to myself, 'Surely the Lord hath marked thee for his own child.' After this conversation, I knelt down and prayed. Her mother and two sisters were present. The place seemed filled with the presence of God; and I have rarely enjoyed more delightful communion with him than in the act of invoking his mercy upon this his returning child, and entreating him to sanctify her sickness and death to the spiritual and eternal welfare of her family friends. I then took my leave, feeling that I should see her no more till we met in the eternal world.

Miss H—— continued to visit her frequently, who remarks in relation to one of her subsequent calls,—

"Her remarks then turned on the state of the redeemed in heaven; but she was so frequently interrupted by violent turns of coughing that it pained me to hear her speak.

" 'O!' said she, 'if ever you feel it right to pray for a temporal blessing, ask that you may not die under the slow and awful ravages of consumption. I know not how it may be with you; but I have often heard young persons, in talking of death, express a wish that this might be the disease by which they were to be brought down to the grave. I have often expressed such a wish.'

"I replied, 'Do you think they do so because they imagine it an easy death, or because they think it gives a long time for preparation?'

" 'Both, perhaps,' she answered, 'but principally the latter. But, O! both are mistaken ideas. The exhaustion, the debility, the weariness, and then the cough, the constant cough and oppression of breathing, not to speak of other things, make life a very burden. I feel that God is very good in giving *me* comparatively easy nights; but

Repentance on a sick bed.Prayer.

for the other idea—how I wish that my words could reach the heart of every living and breathing mortal that now rejoices in health: it is no time to prepare for eternity when the mind is taken up with the body's ailments. It is difficult enough to fix our thoughts on the rest into which we know that we shall enter; but when the soul has to determine the question, "*What shall I do to be saved?*" O! it is hard indeed to find the truth.'

"I saw no change in her, for some time after this, save that she became more languid, and less able to converse. I recollect, once, her speaking of the Trinity, and the apportioning of the work of redemption, as being to her mind 'beautiful, so clear, so like God in its perfection.' There is one thing to which I would particularly call the attention: she *never* neglected prayer, even during the days which she spent in vanity. 'It was this, I believe,' she said, one day, 'that kept me from falling quite away; and when that night—that dreadful night—came, when disease seized me, I said, and I felt, Lord, thy will be done.' Through all the days of her protracted sickness, she observed an hour of prayer. The very day preceding her death, she neglected not this set time of devotion."

Perhaps I can in no way better present to the reader an idea of the last moments of Emma than by inserting an extract from a letter, which I received, shortly after her decease, from the same individual by whose kindness I have been furnished with many of the preceding facts. Having adverted to Emma B——, she remarks,—

"Dear, glorified, happy Emma! Yes, Emma sleeps; *she has fought the good fight—the victory won.* A great change, in the extent and degree of her sufferings, occurred about ten days since. Her throat became so much affected, and so painful as to deprive her of the possibility of swallowing. After this she sank rapidly. It was supposed that an abscess had there formed; and her fears of suffocation were very great. She had, for some time, been

Approach of death.Want of the divine presence.

unable to speak above a whisper ; but now for her to communicate in any way was exceedingly difficult. Like Anzonetta, ‘she suffered hunger and thirst,’ without the power of alleviating them. It appears to me that her bodily pains have been, during the last week, excruciating. She remarked, ‘All that I have suffered before has been as nothing to this.’

“Last Thursday I visited her. She was asleep when I entered ; and I was painfully struck with the change that a few days had made. There was upon her countenance a death-like and agonized expression. She awoke, very suddenly, while I stood bending over her, and a bright look of pleasure seemed to kindle up upon her face. It did not remain, however, but for a moment. It was as fleeting as a meteor. After some inquiries, relative to her bodily pains, I said,—

“ ‘And the mind, Emma—how is that ?’

“She raised her eyes, and, clasping her hands, said, ‘My trust is *very* firm ; but it does seem as if the Almighty kept his presence from me ; and my heart is so cold.’

“She seemed exhausted even with these few words. After a pause, I said something encouraging to her.

“ ‘But,’ said she, mournfully, ‘if I should be deceived !’

“I asked her in whom she trusted.

“ ‘In my Saviour.’

“ ‘Do you place any trust in your own works, Emma ?’

“She suddenly shrunk from the thought.

“ ‘Then, Emma, how can you be deceived in Him who is love and truth itself ?’

“At this moment it seemed to me as if a dark shade came over her, and she raised her eyes with such an affectingly helpless look, that I could scarce bear it.

“ ‘Emma, my darling Emma !’ said Mrs. B——, her mother, ‘what is the matter ?’

“ ‘Raise me.’

“ ‘But what is it ?’

Shrinking from death.

“ ‘Such shrinking from death—so afraid to die,’ she twice repeated.

“ ‘I feared that the moment of her departure was come ; but it was not so. A severe coughing spell came on.

“ ‘Hard to bear,’ she whispered ; and then, exhausted, sank on her pillow.

“ ‘I repeated,

‘ Jesus can make a dying bed,
Feel soft as downy pillows are.’

“ ‘True,’ she said ; then whispered, ‘ read, read.’

“ ‘I took the Bible which lay by her, and commenced reading some passages.

“ ‘The 43d of Isaiah,’ she faintly said.

“ ‘I then read as follows :—*But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel: Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.*

“ ‘I then read several other promises from the same prophet :—‘ Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed : neither shalt thou be confounded. Thy Maker is thy husband ; the Lord of hosts is his name : and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel ; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment : but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the

Divine promises.

Gleams of hope.

waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted ! behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.' After reading these and other promises, I inquired,

" 'Are not these precious promises, Emma ?'

" 'Precious, and strong—very precious,' she replied.

" 'Can you not trust in them ?'

" 'Yes.'

" On Saturday I again saw her ; life was just glimmering. She was very faint, and made signs, as soon as I came in, for me to seat myself at the foot of the bed ; and then to read. I read some promises from the little book called 'Heavenly Manna.'

" 'The Bible,' said she.

" I took the Bible, and commenced reading. I paused after a few moments, she seemed so very weak : the words she next repeated affected me to tears. I marvelled that she could so forget self. She said to her sisters, in broken accents, 'A draught of cool water for Miss H—— to drink ; she must be faint and dry.' When they had complied with her request, she motioned for me to continue. At length she said, 'That will do.' She seemed to be engaged in prayer almost all the time.

" At length I bent over her. 'How are your hopes, Emma ?'

" 'My confidence is not removed ?' Then she said, at intervals,

" 'It has pleased the Lord to give me much patience and resignation to his blessed will ; but he does not shine upon me. I do not feel the joy of his presence.'

" 'But he will come, Emma, and will not tarry.'

The last moments and death of Emma.

“ ‘I trust so.’

“ ‘I told her we had been praying for her at the meeting.

“ ‘I trust your prayers were heard,’ she said.

“ ‘I knelt down by her, and read some passages from Revelations. She listened earnestly; and then seemed again engaged in mental prayer.

“ ‘Short prayer,’ she whispered.

“ ‘Then we knelt; and I prayed with faith, I believe, that she might yet joy in her salvation. Kissing her farewell, I left her.

“ ‘Come again,’ she said.

“ ‘Again I bent my steps to Emma’s; but the freed spirit was already singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. She died at five o’clock, Monday morning, June 15th. Mrs. B—— said, that she was very restless all Sunday and Sunday night, suffering extremely from thirst, but unable to swallow. She spoke, when questioned, on Sunday; and remarked the day, and said,—

“ ‘How, and where, shall I be next Sunday?’

“ ‘At four o’clock on Monday morning, Mrs. B—— observed a great change, and summoned the family. She said, Emma had not been turned for fear of bringing on her coughing spell; but at this moment she turned towards the light without any assistance. Her countenance looked troubled. After a few moments Mrs. B—— said,—

“ ‘If you know me, Emma, press my hand.’

“ ‘She did so, and with a strong grasp.

“ ‘Anxious to ascertain the state of her feelings, Mrs. B—— said, ‘Are you happy *now*, my Emma?’

“ ‘O, yes!’ she said, with animation; and then came on a gasping for breath: and then she was gone! She had departed! She was with the Lamb; walking in the light of the eternal city: no more to wander from him who loved her with an everlasting love.

“ ‘I had thought that Emma would die triumphantly; but when I recall her extreme weakness and suffering, and think, that despite her pains of body, her fearful death, her

Backsliding an insidious disease.

want of the sensible presence of her Saviour, that her faith wavered not, I am almost ready to call it the high triumph of that living principle. Her's was the language of Job :— ' Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' As it is, I feel perfectly satisfied that she will ' hunger no more ; neither thirst any more : but God shall wipe away all tears from her eyes.' ”

There will occur to the reader, from what has been previously remarked, several reasons why it might not be consistent with the divine purpose to grant, to one who had so fearfully drawn back, a very triumphant and rapturous exit. God intends to convey a lesson of moral instruction by all his dealings with the children of men. While, therefore, he enabled this returning penitent to cherish a good and well grounded hope of her acceptance, he, at the same time, meant to connect with the doubts that occasionally darkened her mind, and the fears that disturbed the tranquillity of her soul, an admonition to all who have named the name of Christ, never to turn back from their course.

One has very truly remarked, that “ Backsliding is a disease that is exceeding secret in its way of working. It is a flattering distemper ; it works like a consumption, wherein persons often flatter themselves that they are not worse, but something better, and in a hopeful way to recover, till a few days before they die. So backsliding commonly comes on gradually, and steals on men insensibly, and they still flatter themselves that they are not backslidden.”*

This idea is one that I think is important to be presented distinctly to the reader,—that a person may have declined most fearfully in religion, and yet be flattering himself that all is well. Wherever religion ceases to be the main business of life—wherever there exists a growing disregard to the means and opportunities of grace—wherever there is

* President Edwards' Works, vol. vi. p. 57.

Symptoms of decline in religion.

any loss of tenderness of conscience—wherever there springs up a desire to be conformed to the world—wherever there is a *diminished* desire to exert one's-self for God—wherever progress in the divine life ceases, there already has commenced the first insidious ravages of this fatal disease. The man has already begun to draw back.

How stands the case with you, dear reader? Does the piercing eye of God, whose glance reaches down to the very deepest recesses of your heart, behold in you no symptoms of decay or decline in religion? *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

In contemplating the history of Emma B——, though but a very imperfect sketch has now been drawn, who is not ready to exclaim, “Behold the goodness and severity of God! O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” A sickness unto death was probably the only means that could have brought her back to her father's house. And, therefore, the Lord in mercy stretched forth his hand, and touched her frame with the palsying blight of death. And this he did, because in his everlasting love, and in the sovereignty of his abounding grace, he had determined to save her soul from death.

Perhaps these pages may be read by some professed follower of Christ, who in fact may have fallen as far away from God, as ever did the subject of this brief notice. And yet this backsliding one may be saying, “*I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.*” It has sometimes fallen in our way to meet with those who are trying to wear the livery of Christ, and carry the badges of discipleship with them into the midst of all the gayeties, and fashion, and folly of the world. Such persons might feel wounded, were their claims to the Christian character questioned. There is a day coming when those claims will be impartially examined! Should these pages meet the eye of any such one, may I be permitted to say, “My dear friend, let this sketch which I have

Use to be made of this narrative by the reader.

drawn be a mirror in which you will see the bitterness and sorrow of your latter end. For if the Lord does not make you feel before your mortal hour how bitter and evil a thing it is to depart from him, let me tell you, that you will lie down at last in eternal sorrow."

Reader, have you declined in any degree from the fervour of that love which characterized you when you first gave yourself up in covenant to God? From this sketch, see, O see, how easy it is to violate your covenant vows, and to slide back into the very midst of the world.

Do you feel compelled to write yourself a backslider? Have you already departed very far from the Lord? There is then no time to be lost. If you do not return immediately, your covenant God may have to smite you down with death. When tempted to wander from the Lord, do not forget what it cost to *revive the withered branch*.

THE BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

AN EXTINCT PARISH.

“The love of nature, and the scenes she draws,
Is nature’s dictate.”—*Cowper*.

THEY who have never visited the country of the western lakes can scarcely conceive the vastness, and grandeur, and magnificence of those inland seas. So rich and fertile are the shores that are washed by their waves, that like the river that watered the garden of Eden, this noble chain of lakes may be said to water the garden of the world. It was in one of the summer months, just as the last bright rays of the sun, already sunk below the horizon, were fading away in the western sky, that the writer of these pages was approaching a small village situated on one of those lakes.

There was that delightful repose and quietude, which are peculiar to a country scene at the close of a hot summer’s day, spread over the whole extended landscape, through which the road, that led to the village, lay. I have often thought that this sweet calm of nature was beautifully emblematical, not only of the peace and serenity which is spread over the Christian’s soul at the hour of death, but of that sacred and eternal “*rest which remaineth to the people of God.*”

As I passed along, the laborious cultivator of the earth was just quitting the harvest field, or bending his course

Rural life.

A scene of transcendent sublimity.

homeward with slow and weary step, or standing at the door of his farm-house, preparing to refresh himself, after the toils of the day, on that plain, but substantial meal which constitutes the husbandman's evening repast.

The country around me might still be denominated *new*, but was in a considerably advanced state of cultivation. The rich fields of grain, the luxuriant growth of grass, and the occasional thickets of tall and massive forest trees, bespoke the fertility and strength of the soil, and spread out before the delighted eye a beautiful and varied landscape.

Neither the lake nor village was yet visible, although I knew them to be in the direction in which I was travelling. I had just entered a deep, but narrow ravine, where I found myself at once completely shut out from the view of the cultivated country through which I had previously been passing. As I ascended the opposite bank, I found the road enclosed by a sort of lofty copse, which, being interspersed with forest trees, formed a complete arbour, under which the traveller passed. What added still more to the effect of this novel and highly romantic scene, was the circuitous direction of the road. Winding with serpentine course round a hill which it ascended, it conducted the traveller, gradually, to the top, without disclosing to his view at any one time more than a few yards of its course,—till having reached the summit, he beheld in an instant, spread out before his astonished eye, one broad and almost boundless expanse of waters. Nothing could exceed the effect produced by this unexpected disclosure of transcendent sublimity. The heart that was not touched with deep feeling and lifted up in adoration to God, in view of this scene, must have been alike destitute of taste and of moral sensibility.

An occurrence related to me by a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood of this place, may serve to illustrate the idea just expressed.

A party of gentlemen, who were fond of viewing scenery in which the bold and beautiful, the sweet and sublime

The effect of a sublime scene.Divine worship.

were brought before the eye in close connexion, went out to take a view of the lake from this point. Among the number was a gentleman from Scotland. He was one who possessed a highly cultivated mind; had read much, and travelled far. It so happened, and that rather accidentally, that he had not been previously apprized of there being any thing peculiarly striking in the first view of the lake from this particular point. He was, therefore, totally unprepared for that majestic scene, which, with the suddenness of magic, burst upon his view. So perfectly overpowered was he, at the moment, that he flung himself from his horse, and gazing in enraptured admiration, on his bended knees, and aloud, returned thanks to Almighty God for having spared his life to behold so grand and majestic a display of his works.

The village, which was the place of my destination, lay about half a mile to the left. As I approached it, I could see, in different directions, little groups moving towards the church, an edifice, at times, occupied by all denominations. The celebration of divine worship, according to the usages of the Episcopal church, was an event of such rare occurrence, in this place, that the previous intelligence, that an Episcopal missionary was to officiate that evening, had drawn together an unusually large congregation. The church was already full when I arrived, and I immediately commenced that truly sublime service, which can hardly fail to spread the deepest solemnity over any congregation.

I had advanced in the service to the "*General Confession*," and now paused, after repeating the first sentence of that humble and self-abasing address to Almighty God. I knew not that a single voice would utter the response. But no sooner had that sentence been pronounced, than two or three voices caught it up, and reiterated, in trembling and faltering accents, those solemn words. As the service proceeded, the voices of those who responded began to multiply, and become more firm and animated.

There had been, as I subsequently learnt, some fifteen

The importance of contributing of our abundance

years previous to this time, an Episcopal congregation organized in this place. For a while the church was prosperous. But now it was completely broken up; and the remembrance that it had ever existed had passed from the minds of most of the inhabitants of that village. Will it be inquired what was the cause of the disastrous fate that attended this society?

We answer, precisely that which has defeated the success, and withered the bright prospects, of hundreds of other congregations similarly situated—*the want of a little pecuniary aid, and of a faithful missionary*. It would be well for those who live in the midst of religious privileges to bear in mind the fact, that, in the new and thinly settled parts of our country, the ministrations of the word cannot be continued without aid from the older and well established churches. While we should not relax our efforts, one iota, to extend the gospel to the heathen, we certainly ought not to forget those of our own household who are perishing for lack of knowledge. If the friends and members of the church, who enjoy all its privileges, and join, Sunday after Sunday, in its devout and affecting liturgy, and who, perhaps, are surrounded with ease and affluence; if they could see the sad desolations of Zion; if they could see them, in all their length and breadth, as the missionary often does; if they could see how many of their brethren are totally deprived of those religious privileges which they enjoy; if they could see those little groups of devoted men which, scattered here and there over the moral desert that spreads all around them, are making a prodigious effort to collect and organize a congregation that may be favoured with regular ministrations according to the order and appointment of their own church; and, after having laboured, and toiled, and spent many months of intense anxiety, and, for a while, cheered themselves with the hope of ultimate success, are at last forced to give up their darling project, and sit down, in utter despair, like Hagar in the wilderness, who, when her bottle of water

To sustain new and feeble parishes.

was spent, cast her perishing child under one of the shrubs, "and sat over against him, and lifted her voice and wept;" surely, if they who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, could see, and know, and understand all this, their hearts would be opened—an abundance of pecuniary means would speedily flow into the treasury of the Lord, and the ways of Zion would no longer mourn. And here, let me add, if the reader of these pages shall be impressed with the conviction that the subject of *domestic missions* ought to occupy a wider space in his thoughts, and have a larger share of his attention than it has hitherto done, let him not satisfy himself with this naked theoretic conclusion; let him evince his sincerity by immediate action; let him bring his offering, if it be but a single mite, to the treasury of the Lord; and, when he has given all that he deems it his duty to this object, let him not forget the waste places of Zion *when he kneels at the family altar, nor when he goes up to the temple of the Lord to enjoy the rich ministrations of his word.* When Christians, generally, feel more sympathy for these fields of spiritual destitution—when they evince greater solicitude and more earnest desire for the building up of the tabernacle of the Lord wherever it has fallen down—when they become more earnest and importunate in their prayers to God on this subject—then we may encourage ourselves, as we appeal to the Most High, in the words of one of his former servants, "*thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. And why? thy servants think upon her stones, and it pitieth them to see her in the dust.*"

Among other causes which contributed to the breaking up of the Episcopal church, in the village of which we just spoke, was the *newness of the place*. Many revolutions were constantly occurring, so that in the course of a few years there was an almost entire change in the population. At length the missionary, who planted and watched over this church, was removed by death. He had, for a long

Mr. Heyden.The request.

period, remained to minister to this little flock at a great personal sacrifice. There was no man, like-minded, that offered himself as his successor; and, amid the constant fluctuations of the population gathered on this spot, it was not wonderful, that, in a short time, the congregation became broken up and dispersed.

At the close of the service, an intelligent looking man came up to me, and, announcing his name as Mr. Heyden, kindly invited me to spend the night with him. I soon learnt that he was a farmer, residing in that neighbourhood; and it required no skill to discover that he was a man possessing naturally a strong and vigorous mind, which had been considerably improved by reading and reflection. Mr. Heyden had been reared in the bosom of the Episcopal church, and accustomed to its liturgy. On the present occasion he had experienced a peculiar pleasure in being permitted again to join in those pure and elevated strains of devotion.

We had now just reached his house, and he was expressing the high satisfaction he had enjoyed, when a message arrived from one of his neighbours, requesting an immediate visit from the Rev. Mr. ——. The reason assigned for requesting the visit that night was, that it was feared that Mr. Northend, the sick and dying man to whom the visit was to be paid, would not be alive on the morrow. The request was, of course, immediately complied with. After having taken some slight refreshment, Mr. H—— and myself were soon on our way towards the residence of Mr. Northend. The incidents that occurred at his house will be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE DYING PARENT.

“How our hearts burnt within us at the scene !
Whence this brave bound o’er limits fix’d to man ?
His God sustains him in his final hour !
His final hour brings glory to his God !”—*Young*.

THE distance we had to walk was less than a quarter of a mile. The conversation on the way was of a desultory nature, and related chiefly to the character of the individual we were going to visit.

“Mr. Northend’s death,” said Mr. H——, “will be to me a sore calamity. We have lived here, side by side, with our farms adjoining, for more than twenty years. As neighbours, we have never had any difficulty ; a perfectly good understanding has always subsisted between us. Besides the feelings which bind old settlers together, there is another tie, which has ever linked us in the closest union—we think just alike on religious subjects. Often have we taken sweet counsel together, and talked of Christ and his salvation till our hearts burned within us. We live in a community who have little or no sympathy with us. There is but little spiritual religion around us ; and we have found few whose views, in relation to doctrine and worship, harmonize with ours. These circumstances have created a kindred feeling, and cemented more closely the bonds of friendship between us.

“There is still another reason why I am attached to this man, and it would have attached me to him, had none of the circumstances, to which I have alluded, existed. He is truly a *most sincere and devoted Christian*. He is one

Mr. Northend's character.The sick room.

of the excellent of the earth. I have often thought that if ever there was a perfect exemplification of the precepts of the gospel, in the life and conversation of any individual, it was in this man. Once it was far otherwise. An ordinance of the gospel was blessed to him in a wonderful manner ; and I dare predict, that the great anxiety which he feels to see you this evening, is, to witness the initiation of his grandchildren into the fold of Christ, by baptism, before he dies. There is in his mind, connected with this holy rite, the remembrance of events which constituted a new era in his life."

I was both delighted and surprised with the intelligent and feeling manner in which Mr. H—— conversed upon religious subjects. As he finished the last remark, we had reached the dwelling of Mr. Northend. It was a neat and substantial farm house ; every thing about it wore the aspect of comfort.

Mr. Heyden took me immediately to the sick room. The group assembled there was of a truly interesting character. They consisted of the children and grandchildren of the sick man, together with a few neighbours, who had called to tender their services to the family.

The grave and solemn aspect that sat upon each countenance would have told the most superficial observer, at the first glance, that, in the apprehension of that company, the angel of death had spread his awful wings over the dwelling in which they were assembled.

As we entered the room all were seated except a female, the only surviving daughter of Mr. Northend, who stood, with tearful and anxious eye, bending over the couch of her father.

The venerable old man lay stretched upon the bed, with locks as white as the snow-white pillow upon which his head rested. A holy calm was spread over his countenance. It was plainly evident, however, that he was suffering much bodily pain. His respiration was short, and difficult—his pulse feeble and irregular—and his already

The administration of the holy supper.

sunken eye and ghastly visage indicated that the days of Henry Northend were numbered, and the sands of life almost run out.

As soon as my name was announced, I immediately approached the bed, and took his bony hand, which was already moist with the clammy sweat of death.

“My desire,” he at length said, with some difficulty, “my desire is, to receive once more before I die, if it be the Lord’s will, ‘*the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.*’ ”

The elements having been already prepared, I immediately commenced the communion service; a service at any time, and under any circumstances, solemn and impressive; but doubly so in the chamber of the dying, and under circumstances like the present.

There were several, besides the sick man, who partook of the holy supper, and among the number his three children, a daughter and two sons. The view of his children stretching out their hands to receive the memorials of a Saviour’s dying love, seemed to revive the strength, and spread new animation over the death-stricken features of Mr. Northend. At the conclusion of the service he appeared totally changed. Those symptoms of speedy dissolution, with which he was oppressed when I first entered the room, had entirely disappeared. His voice was now strong, and its tones clear and distinct.

The short silence that succeeded the administration of the Lord’s supper was first interrupted by Mr. Northend addressing himself to me, in the following manner:—

“If you will now administer the sacrament of baptism to my grandchildren, I will withdraw my thoughts from earth, and rest them in the bosom of my God.”

The baptismal service of the church has ever appeared deeply affecting, and truly solemn, to me. But the other sacrament which had just preceded it, and the situation of Mr. Northend, now placed, as it were, on that invisible line which separates time from eternity, imparted to the

A father's blessing.

service, on this occasion, a peculiar pathos, and an almost divine power.

When the administration of the holy rite of baptism was concluded, the old man, raising himself up in the bed, requested that the youngest child, bearing his own name, *Henry Northend*, should be placed upon his lap. When this was done, laying his hands upon the smiling infant, he said aloud,—

“The God of my fathers, the great and merciful God bless you, my child, and all of you, my children. With great desire have I desired to see this hour; it has often been the subject of my prayer since lying upon this bed of sickness, that one might be sent of the Lord to administer these holy ordinances before I closed my eyes in death, and my prayer has been answered.”

“Surely,” continued he, addressing himself to me, “God has sent you here to baptize these little ones, and to administer to my children the pledges of a Saviour’s dying love. *Yea*, and furthermore, to bury me. My two sons, ‘who have now duly received the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ,’ have been long desirous, and, I trust, in a state of preparation, to be partakers of those ‘*holy mysteries*.’ And, eternal God! thou art witness, how long and anxiously I have desired to see these little ones washed in ‘*the laver of regeneration*.’ Do not imagine,” continued he, “that I attach any undue importance to the sacrament of baptism. I would give it in my esteem no higher importance than Christ has given it. I know very well, from what I have observed in others and seen in myself, that *baptized* persons may be as truly alienated in heart from God, and exposed to his wrath, as those who are in an uncovenanted state. I was baptized in infancy, but I spent one half of my life ‘*without hope and without God in the world*.’ Though God was exceedingly merciful to me, and gave me health and domestic happiness, and the means of comfortable subsistence; and though I lived here on

the banks of this lake, daily witnessing the displays of almighty power, and walked amid this scene of beauty and grandeur, spread around us, from which there now seems to ascend, continually, as from one broad altar, the incense of adoration and the song of praise, I lived and walked here '*the enemy of God.*' Baptism does not necessarily make us holy. *It is an outward act—'a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church.'** There must be a renewed state of the affections, and an operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, before we can become truly '*members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.*' If, on our part, agreeably to '*the solemn vow, promise, and profession* made at our baptism, we do actually renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word and obediently keep his commandments,' I believe that Christ, for his part, will most surely keep and perform the promise made in his gospel, '*to release us from sin, to sanctify us with the Holy Ghost, and to give us the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life.*'

"I do love to think and to dwell upon this subject. The baptism of my children was the commencement of a new era in my history.

"O the baptism! How many thoughts rush back to that hour! O my God, hadst thou not blest that ordinance to my soul—hadst thou not, through it, awakened me to a knowledge of my character as a sinner, and led me by the guiding of thy Spirit to flee unto Christ for refuge—where had been my hopes in this hour? I plainly perceive that the world and all its possessions are receding from my view, and that eternity is very near me. Transcendently glorious and exalted does my Saviour appear at this moment; but when I turn my eye to that dark period of my life, in which I was the servant of sin, and was living with-

* The 27th Article of the Episcopal Church.

Mr. Northend's peaceful death.

out any experimental knowledge of Christ, or him crucified, I shudder at the thought. O *the baptism, the baptism*, it saved my soul!"

These last words were uttered in a tone, and with an energy, that seemed almost superhuman. The strength by which he had been enabled to speak so long was the result of excitement. Exhausted by the effort he had made, he sunk back upon his pillow, and died as quietly as the infant child drops to sleep. A slight quivering ran over his features, and shook his frame. Restoratives were instantly used, but to no purpose. He had for ever ceased to breathe.

The house of clay deserted by the immortal spirit.

CHAPTER III.

THE MISSIONARY.

“ In his duty prompt at every call,
He watch’d and wept, he pray’d and felt for all.
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new fledged offspring to the skies ;
He tried each art, reprov’d each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.”

GOLDSMITH.

WHEN it was perceived that the immortal spirit had indeed left its clay tenement, all efforts to recall life were suspended ; and we stood a while, and gazed in the deep silence of intense feeling upon the venerable and unbreathing form of this departed Christian. There was, even in death, a calmness and serenity that rested upon the fixed and motionless features of Mr. Northend, which spoke of the exalted and everlasting peace he had gone to enjoy. Tears were silently stealing down many a cheek in the solemn group that stood around the bed. But as if there had just been enforced by a voice from Heaven, the injunction, “ *Be still, and know that I am God,*” the stillness of deep and undisturbed solitude reigned through the whole house. After some little interval, prayer was proposed, in which all joined with great devotion.

As Mr. Heyden and myself left this dwelling of sorrow, the truth of the sentiment most forcibly occurred to me, that “ *it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.*”

I was so absorbed in the scene that I had witnessed, that I was scarcely conscious where I was, until I found myself in the open air, and beneath one of the most bril-

A night scene.The burial ground.

liantly illuminated heavens that I had ever witnessed. It was nearly midnight. The sky was cloudless. The moon moved on through the resplendent vault of heaven most gloriously ! Around it twinkled ten thousand bright stars. The waters of the Ontario stretched before us like a sea of glory, beautifully irradiated beneath the soft and mellow rays of the orb of night. Not a sound was heard save the gentle ripple that played over the surface of the lake. We had left the house of death. The scene around us was calculated to perpetuate the deep and solemn feeling that had been already excited.

At length, as we passed on, Mr. Heyden, pointing to the heavens, said,

“ Henry Northend has gone to yonder bright world, and will shine like one of those stars in the kingdom of his Master for ever and ever.”

I *felt* too deeply to make any reply ; and so we passed on several yards in silence. As we ascended a small rise of ground, Mr. H—— slackened his pace, and turned a little out of the path. I followed him, and soon saw before us, at a short distance, a plain white marble stone, which seemed to mark the spot where the ashes of some departed fellow mortal rested. As we drew near, I perceived that we were in the neighbourhood of a small burying ground, which I afterwards learnt belonged exclusively to the two families of Northend and Heyden. Mr. H—— went up to the stone just alluded to, and for a moment fixed his eyes upon the spot in deep silence. I read with some surprise on this stone, for it was almost as light as day, “ Sacred to the memory of the Rev. D. P——, who departed this life, &c. *‘ He being dead, yet speaketh.’* ”

“ Do you know any thing,” said I to Mr. H——, “ of the history of this clergyman ? ”

“ Yes,” replied he, “ I knew him well, and have great reason to remember him.

“ You know,” continued Mr. Heyden, “ that just as we arrived at Mr. Northend’s, I was remarking, that recollec-

The rural seat.

The narration.

tions of a peculiar character were connected in his mind with the baptism of his children, and you yourself must have observed with what deep feeling and peculiar emphasis he spoke of '*the baptism*' just before he expired. If the hour was not so far advanced, I think you would be interested in the narrative of the baptism and incidents he alluded to ; and that narrative would tend to illustrate the history and character of him whose ashes rest beneath this sod."

I assured Mr. Heyden that nothing could give me so much pleasure as the narration of which he spoke ; and that with my present feelings it would be impossible for me to sleep. I, therefore, proposed that we should linger around this spot, while he narrated the incidents just alluded to.

A short distance from where we stood, there had shot up, within ten feet of each other, two elm trees, which had attained about half their growth. Between these trees there had been fixed a rude seat, from which, in the heat of the day, there might be viewed, in shaded retirement, the hallowed resting-place of the dead, and the wide-spreading waters of Ontario. Here we sat down ; and Mr. Heyden proceeded with his narration, as follows :—

"It is full twenty years since the Rev. Mr. P—— first visited these parts. The country was then new, and we were entirely destitute of religious privileges. The want of religious privileges was attended with great and almost universal looseness of morals. Little respect was paid to the Lord's day ; when it was not spent in work, it was usually devoted to amusement. Profane swearing was almost universal, and many were addicted to gambling, and deep and dangerous drinking.

"It was owing entirely to the restraining grace of God that I did not go all these lengths ; for at that time, I was far from being under the influence of a practical and heart-felt religion, the only security for sound morality. The news of *the Rev. Mr. P——*'s arrival among us was soon

spread abroad, and made the subject of much conversation through the whole settlement. At this time it might have been truly said, '*We have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen.*' All that could went to hear the missionary preach; and some carried their children, that they might receive baptism. It was intimated to Mr. P——, the first time he preached among us, that there were several families in various parts of the settlement, that were desirous to have their children baptized, and among others, Mr. Northend's name was mentioned. Following this suggestion, he visited those families whose names had been mentioned to him, and where it was desired, administered baptism to their children, and exhorted the parents '*to cleave unto the Lord.*'

"As I had had a previous introduction to Mr. P——, he called upon me, and requested me to accompany him on this same errand to Mr. Northend's.

"Mr. N—— was at this time among the most careless in the neighbourhood, in relation to spiritual things; but being an Englishman by birth, and very much attached to the customs of his fathers, he was desirous of improving the present opportunity of having his children baptized.

"I conducted the missionary to his house, which was then a small log dwelling, standing at one side of a clearing of about ten acres. This was, at that time, all the land he cultivated. Mr. P—— soon apprized Mr. Northend of the errand on which he had come. Mrs. Northend remarked:

" 'I am very sorry that we had not had some previous notice of this, for then we would have prepared better clothes for the children, and had them in some little order.'

" 'Let not this,' replied Mr. P——, 'deter you from doing your duty in giving up your children to the Lord, or prevent you from embracing the present opportunity of having your offspring *grafted into the body of Christ's church.* May it ever, hereafter, be your constant aim and unceasing effort, to see that your children are adorned with piety, and clothed in the garments of the Redeemer's righteousness.'

Infant Baptism.

“ ‘Go,’ said her husband, ‘and get the children together ; we must not miss this opportunity of having them christened.’

“ Mrs. N—— retired to collect the group

“ Mr. P—— asked Mr. Northend if he had a Prayer Book.

“ His reply was, ‘I believe that we have an old one that belonged to my father.’

“ After much search, an old English Prayer Book was at length found under a collection of dingy looking papers and pamphlets that were lodged upon a shelf or board, nailed to the logs that ran transversely across the house, and supported the chamber floor.

“ The children were now present, except the two oldest boys. They, having heard what was intended, had hid themselves in the corn-field. While a search was going on for them, the missionary took occasion to speak upon the importance and exalted privilege of Christian baptism.

“ ‘Yes,’ said Mr. Northend, not understanding the spiritual sense in which Mr. P—— spoke, any more than the woman of Samaria understood the meaning of the Saviour when he discoursed about the ‘*living water*’ at Jacob’s well—‘yes, I have always thought I would have my children christened. I have known persons to lose a fortune on account of their not having been christened, or their not having had their names properly registered at the time.’

“ While Mr. N—— was making this remark, the mother returned with one of the absentees, reporting that the other, the oldest son, a boy about twelve, was nowhere to be found. After some consultation, it was determined, that those that were present should be baptized, at all events.

“ Perhaps they who object to infant baptism, or to the baptism of children whose parents are not pious, would think that all the circumstances I have related go to show, most conclusively, the validity of their objections. And perhaps you may think, for I did, that it would have been

Baptismal service.

well for Mr. P——, before proceeding to the baptismal service, to have explained the nature and spiritual intent of the holy rite he was about to administer. And, in most instances, this would, undoubtedly, have been the true course. But, in this instance, he thought another course preferable, and the result showed that he judged correctly. It was his opinion that no explanations could so luminously or impressively set forth the nature and design of this sacrament as the *baptismal service*."

While Mr. Heyden was relating this, I was indeed most forcibly struck with the apparent injudiciousness of the course pursued, in this instance, by the missionary. And, although the results were favourable in that case, I did not think it a safe precedent to follow. I was too much absorbed in the narrative, however, to interrupt Mr. Heyden, to communicate to him my dissent from his conclusion, and so he went on.

"Without adding one word, therefore, in reply to Mr. Northend's singular remark, he began the service. This service I have always admired, and, in point of sublimity and feeling, it is certainly equal to any human composition. I have heard it pronounced, with great solemnity, on numerous occasions; but never did I hear that sublime service uttered in tones so solemn and deeply impressive as that time. We all *felt* its meaning. The missionary had not proceeded three sentences, before the utmost gravity and seriousness were visible upon every countenance. It seemed as though the words he uttered exerted, at the time, an instantaneous and almost irresistible influence upon our minds. After the questions had been proposed, just as the minister lifted up his eye to heaven, uttering these words, *Grant that the old Adam in these children may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in them*, I looked at Henry Northend. The big tear stood on his cheek; and his wife had covered her face, agitated by deep emotion, with her hands. Each part of the service seemed very affecting, and that

Parental obligation.

Family prayer.

peculiarly so, when the minister, holding the little one in his arms, after having poured the water upon him 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' repeated these words,—*We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.* And there also seemed much meaning and force in the concluding exhortation, and I saw it went home to their hearts; *ye must remember, it is your parts and duties to see that these infants be taught, so soon as they shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they have here made by you.*

"At the close of the service, Mr. P——, kneeling down, offered up a devout and fervent prayer for this family. Then, with much kindness, but yet with great plainness, he thus addressed the parents:—

"'You have been making very solemn promises for your children. Let me tell you, that you cannot keep those promises, unless you have *an altar to the Lord in your dwelling*; unless you gather these children together, morning and night, and pray with them. *For them* you have promised to renounce the devil, to exercise Christian faith, and to lead a godly life. You cannot do this *for them* unless you are in earnest to do it *for yourselves*. You can never do this, either for them or yourselves, unless you look up continually to God in prayer. See what a group of young immortals are committed to your trust! These children, in all probability, will be happy or miserable in eternity, according to the course you pursue with them. They have this day been admitted *into the congregation of Christ's flock*; they have been invested with great and glorious privileges; but whether those privileges will ever be of any service to them, depends, in a very

Happy effect of the use of the baptismal service.

considerable degree, upon you. I do entreat you, therefore, for your children's sake, and for your own sakes, seek, with all diligence and earnestness, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness." "

"These words, in connexion with the effect already produced by the baptismal service, went home to the bosom of those parents like barbed arrows. From that day Henry Northend began to read his Bible, and think deeply about the salvation of his soul. He left off profane swearing. He never again yoked up his cattle, or went a fishing on the lake, on Sunday. Whenever there was preaching in the settlement, whoever else was absent, Henry Northend was there. He has frequently told me, that for weeks, 'the remembrance of his manifold sins and wickedness was such an intolerable burden to him, that he often thought he must sink, beneath their pressure, into the abyss of unending ruin.' "

Here Mr. Heyden paused, and turning his eye to the grave, which we noticed in the early part of this chapter, for a moment seemed lost in thought. The continuation of his narrative will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHANGE.

The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Acts of the Apostles.

“THREE months after the occurrences just related,” at length said Mr. Heyden, keeping his eye still fixed upon the consecrated spot of earth to which it had been turned, “three months after the occurrences just related, there might have been seen, in a log school-house, that then stood on the very spot where yonder church is now built, fifteen persons kneeling to receive the hallowed symbols of the body and blood of Christ. Mr. Northend, his wife, and myself were among the number. O, I shall never forget that man, whose ashes slumber beneath yonder hillock of earth. He was the successful messenger of God to my soul and to the souls of many others in the settlement. Many, through his preaching, were brought to a knowledge of themselves as sinners, and led to seek mercy at the foot of the cross. When I die, I desire to be buried by his side that, in the morning of the resurrection, my body may go up in company with his to meet, in the air, that Jesus whom he taught me to love.

“Yes, through the labours of the Rev. Mr. P——, much good was done. The morals of the whole settlement were greatly improved; an Episcopal church was organized, and, for a while, every thing promised well.

“With Mr. Northend and his family, literally *old things had passed away, and all things had become new.*

Change of heart conducive to intellectual improvement.

Through the enlightening Spirit of God, he had been enabled to cast at the foot of the cross that burden which at first pressed him down, and to find 'peace and joy in believing' on the Lord Jesus Christ. I never knew a character so perfectly changed as was his. His temporal affairs were conducted upon a new and improved plan. Previous to this, he had allowed things to run at loose ends. He was considerably in debt, and made but slow progress in clearing up his land; but a new impulse seemed now to have been imparted to his character. That natural indolence which formerly hung about him was shook off. He became, from principle, uniformly industrious and attentive to business; and the greatly improved condition of his temporal affairs was a striking commentary upon that divine declaration, 'that godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.'

"After this change in his religious character, his intellectual faculties seemed altogether of a new order. Energies of mind that had always lain dormant seemed now roused and called into active exercise. In a few years it was universally conceded, that no man in the settlement thought more deeply, or reasoned more correctly, than Henry Northend. His manners, also, seemed to acquire a suavity and refinement which they did not before possess. These, singular as they may appear, I can assure you are facts."

Unwilling as I am to interrupt the progress of this narrative, I cannot withhold the remark, that I have often witnessed a change exactly coincident with that here stated.

Persons reputed to be below mediocrity in point of intellect, and distinguished for every species of habitual incivility and discourteousness, have, when brought under the influence of religion, developed new faculties of mind, and acquired a character for great amiability of manners. This can be accounted for, without supposing the intervention of any miraculous power

The study of the Bible tends to give expansion to the intellect.

It has been said, "that he who has read and fully understands *one* well-written book is a learned man." If there be any truth in this remark, it must apply with great force to the reading of the word of God. This book contains the elements of all learning and knowledge. It is impossible for the human mind to dwell upon its truths, and to examine its pages with that intensity of feeling and earnestness to discover its hidden treasures which characterize the returning sinner's perusals of the word of God—it is impossible for the human mind to meditate often upon the truths of revelation, and to reflect much upon the "deep things of God," without acquiring, and in time evincing, new and more vigorous powers of thought. The mind, being disciplined by religious meditation, becomes better fitted for thinking accurately upon all subjects; for habits of deep thinking upon any one particular subject are likely to induce the same habits in reference to all other subjects. The astonishing effect which the reading of the Scriptures and pious meditation are capable of producing upon an unlettered and uncultivated mind is strikingly displayed in the letters of the Dairyman's Daughter, addressed to the author of that excellent tract. And when the true spirit of Christianity is imbibed, and that "charity which suffereth long and is kind, which doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, and is not easily provoked," becomes the animating and controlling principle of our actions, it cannot fail to produce a corresponding gentleness of manners. But I have already kept the reader too long from the narrative.

"In all things," continued Mr. Heyden, "Mr. Northend acted agreeably to his Christian profession. No man ever brought the influence of religion to bear more universally upon all, even the minutest actions of his life. In the management of his children he now evinced great judgment, and showed how deeply he felt the awful responsibility that rested upon him in relation to this matter. He seemed to consider himself sacredly pledged and solemnly bound, agreeably to the exhortation in the baptismal service, 'to

Religious instruction joined with prayer.

see that his children were taught, so soon as they were able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, they had made at their baptism, by him.'

"It was a uniform custom with him, from which he never departed, to devote two or three hours every Lord's day to the instruction of his children in religious things. They were not only taught to recite from memory the catechism, but were taught to *understand* it. The nature of baptism was often explained to them—the privileges of a covenanted state—the advantages of being united to Christ, their spiritual head—the fearful condition of those who by wicked works deny that Jesus to whom they had been brought, and by whom they had been blessed, in infancy; these were subjects often discoursed upon at great length.

"Mr. Northend endeavoured not only to *instruct*, but to *interest* his children in these things. He read the Scriptures with them, and selected those parts which were calculated to fix their attention, and make a lasting impression upon their mind. Those scripture narratives that are peculiarly tender and touching, and which are related with a simplicity suited to the capacity of childhood; those examples of devotedness to God, where true piety appears most lovely and interesting,—were not only read, but made the subjects of conversation between this father and his children. In these efforts to rear up these young and tender plants for immortal glory, he did not forget that it is God alone that can give the increase. He often prayed with and for his children.

"The effect of this religious training was truly happy and salutary in reference to most of his offspring; but the unfortunate boy whom we mentioned as having concealed himself in the corn-field, to avoid receiving baptism, was extremely obstinate and wayward. While his little brothers and sisters were listening in delighted admiration to the religious instruction of their father, he always seemed restless and uneasy, glad when the exercise was closed, and ever anxious to escape it. This aversion to religion showed

James Northend.

itself at a very early period. So opposed was he to the receiving of baptism, that he declared it should never be done but by force. His father did not think fit to use coercive means, as he was now upwards of twelve years old. So James Northend was never baptized. And I have sometimes thought that the sad and painful end to which he finally came was the testimony of God, designed to warn those who despise the ordinances of the Most High. All the other children of Mr. Northend became pious at an early age."

CHAPTER V.

THE UNBAPTIZED SON.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons : for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ?

From the Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE Christian's path is not irradiated with continual sunshine. There are seasons when he finds himself wrapped in deep and awful darkness. God sees fit, at times, to "*set him in dark places ; to hedge him about so that he cannot get out, and to remove his soul far off from peace.*" Unforeseen and unavoidable calamity may overtake him. His prospects may be suddenly blasted. His friends, his children, those who are endeared to him by all the tender ties of consanguinity and love, may be torn from his bosom and lodged in the grave.

But in the midst of his severest trials the Christian has the consoling assurance, that these afflictions are not to be viewed as judgments sent in frowning wrath, but as tokens of love and paternal regard. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." All who belong to the household and family of God must expect, sooner or later, these evidences of divine adoption. Afflictive visitations seem necessary to prove us. If we pass through the fiery trial with undiminished confidence in God, our faith, by this very process, will have become more invigorated, and our submission to the divine will more perfect. Our characters will thus have become more exalted, and purified from the dross of sin, and we ourselves rendered more "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Bereavement.

The love of children.

These remarks have been suggested by the continuation of the foregoing narrative, which here follows, as related by Mr. Heyden.

“My friend was now called to tread a rough and thorny path. As I observed to you, he had taken great pains to imbue the young and tender minds of his children with sentiments of piety and love to God. In the course of a few years he was called to part with three of those children. O, sir, if you have never had, and loved, and buried children, you can hardly conceive the nature of this affliction.”

Here Mr. Heyden cast his eye towards the burying ground, and for a moment seemed lost in silent contemplation. The tear that fell upon his manly cheek, and the tones in which he spoke, told me that *he* had children resting there. After drawing the back of his hand across his face, Mr. Heyden thus proceeded:—

“There are a thousand ways in which these little ones entwine themselves around our hearts. To see them so helpless and dependent upon us, looking to us so imploringly in the moment of peril, and running to us for protection; appearing so happy, and joyous, and light-hearted in our presence—to witness in them, day after day, the unfolding of some new capacity, or the performance of some new action; to watch each new development of thought and of moral feeling; to follow them step by step till reason begins to ripen and mature; and to receive from them, at each step, expressions of filial love in all the feelings and simplicity of their young, warm, and guileless hearts. O, these things fasten ten thousand cords around a father’s heart! And if that father has endeavoured to lead his children in the way of life; if he has gathered them around him, and told them the story of the Saviour’s death and sufferings; and as he spoke of the love and the kindness of the Son of God, if he has observed the tears that glistened in their young eyes; and if he has conducted them on in the way of religious instruction until the divine life began to spring up in their souls, he has found his heart bound to

 Christian resignation.

 The cloud that crossed the moon's disk.

them by new ties. To lose such a child—to see him on the bed of death looking so imploringly to us, and when pointed to that blessed Jesus, who, while here on earth, welcomed little children to his arms—to see him endeavouring, with his trembling lips and dying breath, to utter the name of that Jesus,—O, this is indeed trying to the feelings of a father.

“In less than one year Mr. Northend saw three of his children thus called into eternity. But the resignation with which he bore it, and the meek submission with which he bowed to the will of God, seemed to throw a new lustre over his character.”

Here Mr. Heyden paused, and looked upwards for a moment, and then said,—

“Have you not observed, since we have been sitting here, that a few light clouds have gathered in the heavens; and do you not see, that one of a dark appearance has just passed over the moon. This, connected with our conversation, reminds me of a poetic effusion that I met with many years ago:—

‘Methinks if you would know
 How visitations of calamity
 Affect the pious soul, it is shown you there—
 Look yonder at that cloud which, through the sky
 Sailing along, doth cross in her career
 The rolling moon. I watch’d her as it came,
 And deem’d the deep opaque would blot her beam;
 But melting like a wreath of snow,
 It hangs in folds of wary silence round,
 And clothes the orb with richer beauties than her own;
 Then passing, leaves her in her light serene.’”

I looked towards the moon, and was struck with the inimitable beauty and force of the illustration; but determined not to interrupt Mr. Heyden, to express my admiration; he therefore thus proceeded:—

“This was only the commencement of my friend’s afflictions. James Northend, as I have already remarked, when quite young, evinced strong symptoms of a wayward

Early tendencies of James Northend.

and perverse heart. As he grew up, his natural propensities became more manifest, and excited in the bosom of his friends alarming apprehensions that his course would be marked with fearful depravity. He had already become extremely dissipated, fond of low company, and averse to labour.

“This was, indeed, a sore trial to Mr. Northend. James was his first begotten. If he had a favourite, if there was one of his children that shared more tenderly or more largely in his affections than another, it was James. No one can tell how many bitter tears he shed, how many fervent prayers he put up for him. But this child of his love, this idol of his heart, with a bosom steeled against all impressions from parental tenderness, kept on in his evil courses, waxing worse and worse. What rendered this affliction still more trying, was, that Mr. Northend always attributed this perverseness in James, to his own early mismanagement of him.”

I must be permitted to interrupt, for a moment, this narrative sketch, with which Mr. Heyden was favouring me, to offer the passing remark that there can be no doubt but that, in many instances, the neglect and unfaithfulness of parents are the cause of the everlasting ruin of their children. Were a mother to neglect her little infant for a few days, it would inevitably die. We know that the temporal destiny of children is every way very much in the hands of their parents. And all that the Scriptures say, in reference to the duty and results of the religious training of the young, leads us to conclude that parents have a moral power put into their hands, in reference to their offspring, which, if not exerted for good, will certainly involve them in the guilt of destroying the souls of their children. “Were a proper line of conduct pursued, how few *profligate* children, and how few *broken-hearted* parents should we find. The neglect of early *religious* education, connected with a *wholesome and affectionate restraint*, is the ruin of millions. Many parents, to excuse their indolence,

Parental unfaithfulness the cause of the ruin of children.

and most criminal neglect, say, '*We cannot give our children grace.*' What do they mean by this? That God, not *themselves*, is the author of the irregularities and viciousness of their children. They may shudder at this imputation; but when they reflect that they have not given them right precepts—have not brought them under firm and affectionate restraint—have not showed them, by their own spirit, temper, and conduct, how they should be regulated in theirs—when either the worship of God has not been established in their houses, or they have permitted their children, on the most trifling pretences, to absent themselves from it—when all these things are considered, they will find that, speaking after the manner of men, it would have been a very extraordinary miracle, indeed, if the children had been found preferring a path in which they did not see their parents conscientiously tread.

"Let those parents, who continue to excuse themselves by saying, '*We cannot give grace to our children,*' lay their hand on their conscience and say whether they ever knew an instance where God withheld *his* grace, while they were in humble subserviency to him, performing their *duty*? The real state of the case is—parents cannot do God's work; and God will not do *theirs*. But if they use the means, and *train up a child in the way he should go*, God will never withhold his blessing.'"*

How many there are that can bear testimony, that, under God, their first and permanent religious impressions were owing to the pious, affectionate care of their parents, and to that judicious and affectionate course of discipline under which they were reared. It is not parental *fondness*, nor parental *authority*, taken separately, that usually issues in such happy results.

"A father may be as fond of his offspring as Eli, and his children be the sons of Belial; he may be as authoritative as the *grand Turk*, and his children despise, and plot

* Introductory Remarks to a Memoir of Mrs. Mary Cooper. By Dr. Adam Clarke.

Parental authority, and fatherly affection.

rebellion against him. But let parental *authority* be tempered with *fatherly affection*; and let the rein of discipline be steadily held by this powerful but affectionate hand; and *there* shall the pleasure of God prosper; *there* will he give his blessing, even life for evermore. Many interesting families have been *spoiled*, and many *ruined*, by the *separate* exercise of these two principles. Parental affection, when alone, infallibly degenerates into foolish fondness; and parental authority frequently degenerates into brutal tyranny, when standing by itself. The first sort of parents will be loved, without being respected; the second sort will be dreaded, without respect or esteem. In the first case, obedience is not exacted, and is therefore felt to be unnecessary, as offences of great magnitude pass without punishment or reprehension; in the second case, rigid exactness renders obedience almost impossible, and the smallest delinquency is often punished with extreme torture, which, hardening the mind, renders the duty a matter of perfect indifference." It is hoped that these remarks will not be thought irrelevant to the point which our narrative here brings distinctly to view—*the ultimate ruin of children, resulting from neglect and mismanagement on the part of parents.*

Mr. Heyden proceeded in the sketch that he was giving of this family, and particularly of that unhappy son who evinced, even in childhood, so many strong symptoms of perversity and waywardness, as follows:—

"As I just remarked, James Northend was extremely averse to labour; but seemed very fond of being on the lake, and of associating with boatmen. He now took his own course, and determined to follow boating on the lake as a business. This brought him into habits of intimacy with the lowest and most depraved part of society. He was thus removed from the means of grace, and from the influence of religious people; and his acquaintances, in general, now gave him up as a lost man.

"It was a few years after James began to follow the

The dark night.

The Christian lovely in death.

Trust in Jesus.

lake, that his mother was taken very ill, and, from the violence of her disease, her recovery was despaired of. She expressed great anxiety to see him before she died. Boats were leaving here almost every day, and the family took great pains to send tidings of this to James.

“It was a very dark rainy night, when intelligence came to my house that Mrs. Northend would not probably survive till morning. I immediately hastened there, and found but few individuals present except their own family. Mrs. Northend was evidently rapidly failing, but still able to converse. I do not know that I ever saw one appear more lovely in death, or able to look into the eternal world, on the brink of which she then lay, with more calmness or composure.

“I remarked to her, that I hoped that she felt resigned to the will of God, and ready to obey his summons.

“‘O yes,’ she replied, ‘God has been very merciful to me; his Holy Spirit has brought most of my rebellious thoughts into submission to his will. And I can truly say that I find unspeakable peace and comfort in resigning myself and all my concerns into his hands. When I look back on my past life, and see how devious has been my path, and how deviating my steps, the creature of a thousand changed and changing purposes; at one time firmly resolved to devote all my powers and faculties to the service of God, and perhaps before an hour had passed, all my good resolutions swept away, and myself brought *into subjection to the law of sin, which is in my members*—O, when I think of these things, I should sink into utter despair did I not remember that I was to be saved by free and unmerited grace. Yes, Jesus,

“‘Thou must save, and thou alone;
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.

“‘O, how infinite is that love, how indescribable that goodness which has promised to lift me from the depths

A mother's bitterness in death.

The solemn interview.

of sin, and exalt me to a seat at God's right hand. When I look forward to *the things which are not seen; the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, I long to depart and be with Christ. But then the thought of those I am leaving; yes, there is one bitter, bitter thought—my James—my prodigal son—O, that I could see him, and leave him my dying entreaty to turn from the ways of death.'

"The rain was pattering fast upon the roof, and the night exceedingly dark; all within the house was quiet and composed. During these remarks of Mrs. Northend, James arrived, and had entered the room with a noiseless tread. The curtains that hung around her bed had prevented her noticing his presence. As she made these last remarks, he went forward just as he had left the boat, clad in his sailor dress, dripping with rain, and kneeled at her bedside; with one hand he covered his own face, and with the other clasped the dying hand of his mother.

" 'O my James, my James,' she exclaimed, 'I am going to die—and must we be parted for ever? Have I borne and nursed you—have I carried you in my arms, and cherished you in my bosom so many days and nights, that you might become *a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction*. O! my son, this is the last appeal that I shall ever make to you. Do turn to God. If you have no pity on your own soul, do have pity upon the tears and agony of your dying mother. O my God, I ask for this child but one thing—the salvation of his soul.'

"Never did I witness so truly an affecting scene as this. The mother soon died. The son, for a little while more steady, soon returned to his former courses.

"Mr. Northend submitted to the loss of her who had been so long his companion and dearest earthly friend with great Christian resignation, looking forward with confident expectation to their happy future meeting in the kingdom of glory.

"About this time a relative of his of whom he had little

Fraudulent transaction.

personal knowledge, came into the neighbourhood. He was a man of great plausibility, but at the bottom very corrupt and unprincipled. He had been engaged for many years in various speculations, and had considerable property in his hands. Very soon after his location in this place, he came to Mr. Northend, in great apparent distress and agitation of mind, and told him, that an unforeseen casualty had placed him in such circumstances that it became necessary for him to ask some one to lend him his name as an indorser to the amount of a few thousand dollars; that not the slightest risk would be run in doing so, as he had abundant means to meet all his pecuniary responsibilities. Mr. Northend inconsiderately yielded to his request. This relative had now attained his object. He had thrown the burden of several thousand dollars of debt upon the shoulders of another. He knew that Mr. Northend now stood between him and the demands of the law, and he therefore never made a single effort to pay one of those debts. It was a cool deliberate calculation on his part to defraud Mr. N—— of just that amount of money. Mr. Northend, when it was too late, discovered this fact, and then was made to understand very distinctly what the wise man meant when he said, ‘*He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretiship is sure.*’ Mr. Northend was obliged to pay the whole amount for which he had become responsible, and in doing so, his property was reduced to less than one half of what it was before. He did not, however, allow himself to be in the slightest degree ruffled or discomposed by this disastrous occurrence; but used cheerfully to remark, when allusion was made to it, ‘Thank God, through his mercy I have an inheritance which the fraudulent cannot wrest from me. God is taking care of that. It is *incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.*’

“Another and more severe trial was now at hand.

“A few years had elapsed since the death of Mrs. Northend. James continued to follow the lake, and had become

The gale.

The shipwreck.

The awful catastrophe.

the master, and, in part, the owner of a small schooner. The navigation of this lake is somewhat dangerous on account of sudden squalls. On one occasion, about the time that the arrival of James Northend was expected, with his schooner, there blew up one of the severest gales I ever witnessed. In a short time there came news that a schooner was wrecked, and in a sinking condition, within sight of the shore. In a few minutes the shore was lined with spectators, and it was soon decided that it was James Northend's boat. A number of persons could be distinctly seen clinging to the yet floating wreck. The first thing that arrested my attention when I came to the shore was Mr. Northend, walking backward and forward in the deepest agony. In his haste he had left his house without his hat, and his long white hair was floating in the wind, which gave to him a wild and distracted appearance. An attempt had just been made to send out a small boat to the relief of the perishing crew; but there was not a boat to be had that could have lived five minutes in that gale.

“Mr. Northend was imploring them to make another effort.

“‘O save my child,’ he said, ‘I will give all that I possess if any one will make the effort.’

“To have made the attempt would have been certain destruction. Of this Mr. Northend soon became sensible, and desisted from his importunity. The storm accelerated the approach of night, and in fifteen minutes after I reached the shore, darkness settled down upon the sinking wreck, and blotted it, together with its perishing crew, for ever from our sight. Mr. Northend still stood gazing in the direction of the wreck, trying to pierce with his dim eye through the darkness, to catch another glimpse of his profligate, but still beloved child. I went up to him, and taking him by the arm, begged him to return to his house, and remember where his trust should be placed.

“‘O yes,’ said he, turning away from the wild commotion of agitated waters that was roaring around us, ‘O yes,

Submission.

Concluding reflection.

my heart is indeed overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Had James been penitent—could I have had any evidence that his peace was made with God! The thought of his going to an endless perdition—how agonizing! O God, help me to bow in humble submission to this dispensation, and say, *Thy will be done.*'

"As was to be expected, when the morning came, no part of the wreck was visible.

"From this time Henry Northend became much abstracted from the world. 'His conversation was in heaven.' The subject of religion seemed the only one that could interest him. This interested him deeply and powerfully. However weary or worn out with fatigue, the mention of the blessed Saviour's name would at all times arouse him up to immediate warmth and animation. He has lived the life, and died the death of the righteous. Peace be to his memory."

When this interesting narrative was finished, we went to Mr. Heyden's house.

After I had retired to my bedroom, the following reflection arose in my mind: 'How wonderful are the ways of God! How true it is that they who seek him shall find mercy, and they who refuse to obey him shall eat of the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices. Here is one instance in which God has blessed, in a signal and visible way, the sacrament of infant baptism to the salvation of souls, and to the magnifying of his own glory. How strongly should this urge all parents to the discharge of this most plainly inculcated duty.'

LITTLE ANN.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

.....“ Christ ;
To him let children come,
For he hath said they may ;
His bosom then shall be their home,
Their tears he'll wipe away.
For all who early seek his face
Shall surely taste his love ;
Jesus shall guide them by his grace,
To dwell with him above.”

ONE has beautifully remarked—“ What a gratifying occupation it is to an affectionate mind, even in a way of nature, to walk through the fields, and lead a little child by the hand, enjoying the infantine prattle, and striving to improve the time by some kind word of instruction ! I wish that every Christian pilgrim in the way of grace, as he walks through the Lord's pastures, would try to lead at least one child by the hand ; and perhaps while he is endeavouring to guide and preserve his young and feeble companion, the Lord will recompense him double for all his cares, by comforting his own heart in the attempt. The experiment is worth the trial. It is supported by this recollection ; ‘ The Lord will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. Behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and

The Sunday-school teacher's work.

His crown.

carry them in his bosom, and *shall gently lead those that are with young.*' ”*

The Sunday-school teacher is engaged in a work similar to that here recommended. He is trying to lead, not simply one child, but a whole group of little ones to the feet of Jesus. His employment in some respects resembles that of the minister of the cross. He is a co-worker with Christ in the enterprise of bringing mind—immortal, undying mind—under the power of truth and holiness. Hence it is a perfectly legitimate inference, that the enterprise in which he is engaged is the cause of God, and cannot fail ultimately to succeed. The apocalyptic address to the angel of Smyrna, therefore, is an appropriate exhortation, with which to urge the Sunday-school teacher on in the path of effort and of duty, “*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*”

Though Sunday-school teachers often meet with discouragements, and have to encounter many difficulties, this should be their watchword with which to cheer each other onward in this high and holy path of benevolence: “*If we are faithful, we shall have, when we reach the goal, a crown thickly set with rich and resplendent gems.*” Yes! a group of young immortals, sanctified and saved through the truth which they were the happy instruments of dispensing—*this* will be their crown—their glorious crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord! What an encouragement is this, to prompt the Sunday-school teacher to renewed effort, as he takes his seat Sabbath after Sabbath in the midst of his class, and seeks to direct their minds to divine and heavenly things.

This employment, especially when we witness any fruits of our labour, is calculated to enliven the mind with hope and fill it with gratitude. “And should our endeavours for a length of time apparently fail of success, yet we ought not to despair. Early impressions and convictions

* The Young Cottager, by Legh Richmond.

The need of faith and prayer, and patient waiting.

of conscience have sometimes lain dormant for years, and at last revived into precious existence and maturity." Where the fruit is not immediate, there is a greater demand for faith in the divine promises. The promises of God are sure. His word cannot fail. "Write it," therefore, "and make it plain upon the tables" of the child's memory, and conscience, and heart, "that he may run that readeth. At the end it shall speak, and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." As certain as the rain and dew which moisten the earth render it fruitful, so certain will the word of God, communicated in faith and prayer, produce sooner or later decided and permanent results. It is the declaration of God himself, "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Even should the Sunday-school teacher toil on till death, without *witnessing* any spiritual fruits resulting from his labours, if he is faithful in doing all that can be done for the salvation of his class, this divine promise will sustain him at every step, and make him feel that, whether he sees it here or not, his "labour will not be in vain in the Lord."

Still I believe there are few cases, where Sunday-school teachers are truly faithful, in which they do not witness some decided fruits of their labour. Such fruits are cheering; and are calculated to encourage our hearts and to strengthen our hands, in the efforts we are making to lead the young in the way everlasting.

The following brief sketch of the last sickness of *Ann Wenman* may tend to animate and encourage those who are engaged in the noble, yet arduous and self-sacrificing duties of a Sunday-school teacher.

Ann Wenman was attached to the Sunday-school of —

Ann Wenman.Who should become teachers of babes.

church, New York, in the summer of 1830, the time to which this brief notice relates. How long she had been previously a member of that school, or what had been her previous history, or the history of her family, I have no means of ascertaining. At the time to which I refer, she was in the class, and under the instruction of Mrs. R——. And here I cannot but remark how well it would be—if married ladies who have leisure, and cultivated minds, and experience in managing children, would more frequently engage in the duty of instructing the young in the Sunday-school! In the primitive church, the office of a female catechist, an office not unlike that of the Sunday-school teacher, was, at one period, not permitted to be held by any who had not been the mother of children, that she might have patience and discretion, and the tenderness of maternal feeling to aid her in the proper training of her young charge.* But this duty—the duty of instructing children in the Sunday-school is generally thrown upon the young, who often have little or no experience. And this may account in some degree for the want of those large spiritual results which we might reasonably expect from a moral enginery so powerful as that of the Sunday-school.

Ann was highly favoured in her teacher. Mrs. R—— had lived long enough to know that life was not made up of flowers and golden dreams. She had tasted of a bitter draught from affliction's cup, and been thereby driven to seek comfort at the foot of the cross. Having surrendered herself to the Saviour, she felt it her duty to try to do something to promote his glory. The Sunday-school, therefore, very naturally presented itself as a field of labour in which she might testify her love to Christ, and advance the interests of his kingdom. With these views she entered the school, in sober earnest, to make her efforts productive. She soon found that Paul might plant, and Apollos water, but that God alone giveth the increase.

* Bingham's Antiq. book ii. sect. 3. p. 306.

Prayer.

Mode of teaching.

Solemn appeal.

She found that in the business of Sunday-school exertion she could do nothing without prayer. This, however, did not abate, but increased her active efforts to bring the minds of the children of her class under the direct influence of truth. In the attainment of this end, she thought it necessary to visit every member of her class frequently, usually as often as once a week. The immediate result of this effort was complete success in winning the entire affections of every child under her care.

Mrs. R—— did not content herself simply with hearing the children of her class recite their lessons by rote, but sought, in a great variety of ways, to lead them to *understand* the truths they were repeating, and to soften and affect their hearts by those truths. It was her usual custom to impress upon their minds, every time she heard them recite, whether those considerations were called up by the lesson or not,—*their accountableness to God—their own exceeding sinfulness—their entire dependence upon Christ for salvation—the importance of immediate repentance—and the certainty of death, and a coming judgment.*

This repeated exhibition of solemn truth, being in consonance with the divine precept of giving line upon line—precept upon precept—here a little and there a little—exerted a most benign and salutary influence upon the minds of all the members of the class, especially upon that of *Ann Wenman*. It was not unfrequently the case that, at the close of Mrs. R——'s remarks, Ann would appear deeply affected, and sometimes bathed in tears.

One Sunday, Mrs. R—— was unusually solemn in her manner, and touching in her appeals. On that occasion she concluded her remarks by saying,—

“My dear children, it is very possible that some of you may never again be permitted to come to this Sunday-school room, and hear these sacred truths. It is very possible that some of you may die, or be laid upon a sick and dying bed, before the dawn of the next Sabbath morning! Have you truly repented of your sins? Are you prepared to

The impression made upon Ann's mind.

meet the great God of heaven? Have you given your hearts to Christ? How sad it would be, if you should be called away in the midst of your heedlessness, and go to the judgment in your sins!"

These remarks made a very deep impression upon Ann's mind. She wept bitterly. The Spirit of God was carrying home the truth to her conscience. These remarks of her teacher seemed in some respects prophetic in reference to her. It was indeed the last time that Ann ever went to that Sunday-school room. During the following week, she met with a shocking disaster, which ultimately terminated her career, and bore her into the eternal world. We shall, in the next chapter, proceed to detail some of the circumstances connected with this melancholy event, and show how the mind of this child was affected in view of eternal things.

What may be seen in the abode of poverty.

CHAPTER II.

THE FATAL DISASTER.

“No present health can health ensure
For yet an hour to come ;
No medicine, though it oft can cure,
Can always balk the tomb.”

COWPER.

ANN WENMAN was the child of a poor widow, who supported herself by the labour of her own hands. Perhaps the thought may cross the reader's mind, that it is hardly worth his while to stop to read the next dozen pages of this volume, inasmuch as all they promise is to conduct him into the lowly tenement of want, that he may learn how a poor sick child, whose intellectual powers were not above mediocrity, and in whose religious exercises there was nothing remarkable, felt and acted on a dying bed. And yet if the reader loves the Saviour, and bears in mind how much it cost to redeem the soul of a poor child—if he can find pleasure in tracing the workings of divine grace in the humblest subject upon which the Holy Spirit operates—we think he will find, even in this lowly instance, around which no feelings of sentimentalism can be gathered, enough to awaken the emotions of adoring love, and cause him to exclaim, *This is the mighty power of God!* Into that abode of poverty, whither we purpose to conduct the reader, the Lord Jesus Christ condescended to enter; yea, the Holy Spirit thought it not beneath the exalted work on which he was sent, to visit that humble spot *daily* with his sacred presence.

Ann.	Her clothes on fire.	Her first wish.
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As we have already remarked, Ann's mother was obliged to earn her livelihood by daily toil, which usually took her away early in the morning from her family, whom she did not see again till evening. Ann, being the eldest of the children, was usually left in charge with the other children. She was now about eleven years old, and uncommonly sedate and womanly for one of her age. On the morning upon which the fatal accident occurred, to which allusion has been already made, Mrs. W—— went from home at a very early hour, leaving Ann to prepare breakfast for herself and the children. About the time her mother left, Ann arose and entered upon the duties which had been committed to her. She had already made a fire in a moveable furnace which stood on the hearth, in the fire-place, and had placed the lamp with which she had kindled the fire down on the floor beside her. As she proceeded in these preparations for breakfast, while in the act of stooping down to place the tea-kettle on the furnace, her clothes, which were of a cotton fabric, came in contact with the flame of the lamp, and were in a moment in a light blaze. No one that has not witnessed a spectacle of this kind, can scarcely conceive the agony of such a moment. What could she do? There was no one near her that could render her any assistance. Her screams brought some person in an adjoining tenement to her aid; but before relief could be rendered, her back from her neck to her feet was so burned, that the physician remarked, that had the flame continued unextinguished two minutes more, she would have been a corpse.

The first thing that Ann said, after her wounds were dressed, and her mother sat down by her to try to soothe her suffering, was—

“Will you not send for Mrs. R——, my Sunday-school teacher? I think I shall not get well, and I wish to see her.”

Mrs. R—— was immediately informed of the dreadful accident that had befallen Ann. Very much distressed

Ann's interview with her Sunday-school teacher.

with this intelligence, she hastened to the spot, to see what relief or assistance she could render. The remark that this little sufferer made when Mrs. R—— first entered the door, shows that pious remarks addressed to children are seldom lost.

“Do you not recollect,” said she, “that you told me last Sunday, that very likely some one of us would die, or would be laid upon a dying bed before the close of the week? I think this is my case—I do not think I shall ever get well.”

Mrs. R—— was deeply affected by this burst of deep and ingenuous feeling on the part of Ann, and gave her that kind and salutary advice which her case seemed to demand. Ann had no personal acquaintance with her pastor. She had heard him address the children frequently, and speak to them about their eternal salvation, as from Sunday to Sunday he came into the school, to see how they were progressing. Her mind was impressed with the conviction, that there was but little probability that she should get well, and she now felt anxious to do all that she could to be prepared for death. She thought her minister could tell her what she must do to die happy, and she, therefore, besought Mrs. R—— to invite him to come and see her. Several days, however, passed after this occurrence, before he could visit her.

The impression made upon my mind, at my first call, will never be erased. The spirit of this child seemed to be in strange and striking contrast with every thing around me. It was a hot summer's morning, the weather exceedingly sultry and oppressive. All nature appeared to droop, and the feeble and unsteady step of each passer by indicated the universal sense of lassitude that was felt. Ann's mind alone seemed unenfeebled, and full of wakeful and active energy. The place where she was lying was a low basement room, in an indifferent looking house. The room itself, however, bore the aspect of cleanliness and comfort.

As I entered, Ann recognised me, and announced my

Ann's conversation with her pastor.

name, although I had no recollection of ever having seen her before.

Though suffering much and intense pain, a smile lit up her countenance at the sight of one who could speak to her about her soul.

I sat down by her bed, and remarked,—

“Ann, I feel grieved to hear of the dreadful accident that has befallen you; but God, I doubt not, means to do you good by this affliction. Perhaps he has let the fire burn your body, so that your soul need not be burnt up for ever. If all the suffering you feel shall lead you to pray and seek God's face and favour, so that in the end you become his child, you will not regret that this dreadful accident has happened. I was very happy to know that you wished to see me. I presume you wish me to talk to you about your soul. I trust you have learned by your attendance upon the Sunday-school, that in order to die in peace and dwell with God in life everlasting, it is necessary we should be *changed and made new creatures*. Are you aware, Ann, of this?”

“Yes, sir,” she replied, “and it was on this account I wanted to see you.”

“Well, Ann, how are we to be saved? How shall we be made fit to dwell with God? Can we make ourselves holy and pleasing in the sight of God?”

“O no,” was her ready reply, “we cannot make one hair black or white, much less make our sinful hearts clean in the sight of God—Christ must save us.”

Struck with the intelligent manner in which she responded to my questions, I wished to know whether indeed she had any experimental knowledge of the way of life. I took up a Bible which was lying on the bed near her, and read to her several portions of Scripture, relating to our guilt and sinfulness by nature, and the impossibility of pleasing God or gaining his favour without holiness; and then turned and read other short selections descriptive of the Saviour's errand to this earth, and the great work he

Conversation with Ann.

came to accomplish. This was followed by reading some of the offers of mercy and pressing invitations, addressed to sinners in the gospel.

Making some remarks by way of explanation upon each passage as I went along, I concluded by saying :

“Do you think what I have been reading has any relation to you ?”

“I think it all relates to me,” she replied.

“Well, which of these passages gives you most comfort ?”

“That Christ has come into the world to save sinners,” was her immediate reply.

“Do you then think that you are a sinner, and that you can be saved only by Jesus Christ’s coming into the world ?”

“I do. I know that I am a great sinner, and I have sometimes thought I should never be happy again ; for the recollection of my past wrong doings rises up so before me ; but when I remember what is said about Christ’s coming to die for sinners, I hope he will have mercy upon me.”

“Do you feel willing, Ann, to give yourself up to God ; are you ready to acquiesce in whatever he determines concerning you ?”

“I trust I am.”

“Then you are willing to die ?”

“*I wish to die*,” was her answer.

“You should look up to your heavenly Father, Ann, continually for pardon and grace. He hears children when they pray—He will blot out their sins for the sake of his Son—He will make them every way resigned to his holy will.”

I then kneeled down by her bedside, and prayed : she repeated with me the Lord’s Prayer, and appeared deeply affected by this devotional exercise.

As I left the room, Ann begged of me that, if it would not be too much trouble, I would call again.

The widowed mother.

Her widowed mother followed me out of the door, and, with eyes full of tears, said, "Ann is indeed an altered child. She used to be fretful, and easily irritated; but now, she is as meek and patient as a lamb. O, sir, you cannot think with how much patience she bears all her pains; and she is talking constantly about religion. Last night, as I was lifting her up in the bed, she said, '*Dear mother, I expect I shall die, but I hope we shall meet at God's right hand.*' "

The mother was not professedly pious. Like hundreds of others in our large cities, who seldom attend upon any place of public worship, though the streams of earthly happiness were dried up around her, she was still looking to the broken cisterns of earth for relief. The Lord saw it necessary to lay the rod of affliction upon her again and again. One and another were taken, till she was a childless widow. These multiplied afflictions, it is hoped, led her to the fountain of living waters.

CHAPTER III.

EVIDENCES OF A WORK OF GRACE.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.

From the twelfth of St. Matthew.

SOCRATES would not permit any to enter his school who were not thoroughly acquainted with geometry. Jesus Christ condescends to teach the poorest child that lifts up its feeble cry for help. The poor, the ignorant, and the dying find him ever attentive to their supplication. Though Ann lived for several months, she was gradually wasting down to death, and had very little relief, at any time, from pain. She was visited by a number of pious females during this period; and, after her decease, I requested one, whom I knew had seen her frequently during her illness, to send me, in writing, the substance of any conversations that might be deemed interesting or useful. This request was kindly granted, by the following communication :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—As it is a great gratification to me to comply with all your wishes, I was resolved to make the *attempt* to do so in the case of little Ann. And upon recurring to scenes I witnessed in her sick room, I find impressed upon my memory expressions of hers, which are interesting to me *now* still more than they were when first uttered, as they afford the consoling hope that she is now near that Redeemer whom she had learned to love while on earth.

“Conversing with Ann, one day, I asked her, what event it was that happened to all ?

“ ‘We all must die,’ was her answer.

“ ‘What becomes of our *bodies*?’

“ ‘They are put in the grave.’

“ ‘Do our souls also die?’

“ ‘No, they go to another world.’

“ ‘Do you think that all those who go to another world are happy?’

“ ‘O no—only they who are good.’

“ ‘I asked her what she meant by being good? She was silent a moment, and then said, ‘Those who love God and pray to him.’

“ ‘Why should we love God?’

“ ‘Because he made us, and sent his Son Jesus Christ to redeem us.’

“ ‘How did he redeem us?’

“ ‘He left heaven, and came into this world, and died for sinners.’

“ ‘Was it necessary for any one to die for us?’

“ ‘Yes, because we had sinned against God, and he was angry; but he punished Jesus instead of us.’

“ ‘You say that he came into the world to save sinners—does he save *every* sinner?’

“ ‘No—only those who are sorry for their sins, and go to him and beg him to forgive them.’

“ ‘Do you feel yourself to be a sinner?’

“ ‘O, yes! I know that I am.’

“ ‘Why do you think so? you are but a little girl.’

“ ‘Yes—but I know that I have done a great many wicked things.’

“ ‘Have you felt sorry for your sins?’

“ ‘Yes,’ said she, with much feeling, ‘*very* sorry.’

“ ‘Then what do you do?’

“ ‘I pray to Jesus Christ that he will have mercy upon me and forgive me.’

“ ‘And do you think he hears you?’

“ ‘Yes—for my minister says he always hears those who are in *earnest* for what they ask.’

Office of the Holy Spirit.

“A few days after, I called again. She received me with a sweet smile, saying she was glad to see any one who would talk with her about her soul. ‘Our minister,’ said she, ‘has been here, and he read the Bible to me, and told me what it meant, and prayed for me:—was it not very kind?’

“‘My dear little girl, your minister loves to visit the sick; but let us now think of those things that we were speaking of the last time I saw you. You said that you had done many things that were not right. Now, let me ask, why you did them?—why have you not kept God’s holy laws?’

“‘She made me no answer.

“‘What kind of a heart did you come into the world with?’

“‘With a sinful heart,’ she replied, ‘and *that* must be the reason why I have not done as I ought to have done—is it not?’

“‘Yes, Ann—it is because our *hearts* are wrong, that our *actions* are so too. If our hearts were right, we should love God, and delight to think of him, and do every thing to please him. But we are unholy and depraved, and love the things of this world more than the things of God. But do you think that we can enter God’s heavenly kingdom with unholy hearts?’

“‘O no.’

“‘Then what must we do? What does your catechism teach you that the Holy Spirit does for us?’

“‘The Holy Spirit sanctifies us.’

“‘What is the meaning of *sanctify*?’

“‘To make holy.’

“‘Well, this means that God’s Spirit must change your heart to make it new and holy. Therefore, when you pray to your Saviour to forgive your sins, what else should you pray for?’

“‘For his Holy Spirit to change my heart; and this I will and do pray for.’

“The next time I saw her she looked very ill, and was

Preparation for death.

exercised with much pain ; but, with a pleasing serenity of countenance, said,—

“ ‘ I have been praying that if I am to die now, I may be prepared for heaven ; and that I may be enabled to bear, with patience, all that the Lord may be pleased to lay upon me. If I get well, O, how I shall love to go to my Sunday-school and church again. I hope I shall be a very different girl, and improve more than I ever have done before.’ ”

“ On another occasion, I asked her if she did not grow weary and discouraged in suffering so much pain ? ”

“ ‘ Sometimes,’ said she, ‘ I do ; but then I think about God, and heaven, and Jesus Christ, how much he suffered for us ; and that eases my pain, and makes one love him. Besides, a good lady sent me a hymn-book, and I have been learning a hymn to say to you.’ ”

“ She then opened the book, and handing it to me, repeated the hymn, beginning,—

‘ Jesus, Saviour of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly !’

“ ‘ This was the last time I had any conversation with her. ”

“ ‘ The next time I saw her, the violence of the pain she endured had produced spasms ; and the next thing I heard, she was no more. ”

Yours, &c.”

Ann continued gradually to grow in grace, and to be manifestly ripening for heaven. Her views of divine truth became more distinct, and her hopes more firmly anchored in the Saviour, as she drew near the shaded valley of the king of terrors. The approach of that last consummating event, which closes our account, and ushers the soul into the unveiled presence of a holy and heart-searching God, cannot be contemplated, even by the established Christian, without deep and solemn awe. It is a lamentable truth that too many professed Christians are living for this world. Hence they are never prepared to die. Death comes to them clad in terror’s garb. It will be abundantly manifest,

Strong presentiment of death.

if we will reflect for a moment, that one great cause why this event is so much dreaded is, that we have laid up too many treasures upon earth. We have too many interests and objects of attachment in this world.

They who have withdrawn their affections from the world, and laid up all their treasures in heaven, generally die full of joy and triumph.

Necessary absence, for a few weeks previous to Ann's death, deprived me of the satisfaction of being with her in her last moments. The few particulars that I have to record, I received from her sorrowing and bereaved mother.

Ann continued to manifest to the last great patience, while enduring the most excruciating suffering. Notwithstanding all her friends seemed to cherish the hope that she would recover, yet she most evidently had a strong presentiment that it would be otherwise. About a fortnight before her death, her grandmother thought to please her by telling her that she had just been purchasing her two new dresses.

"I shall want but one, and that a white one," said Ann, with great solemnity.

About this time some one came in, and, addressing her, said,—

"You little sufferer, how my heart bleeds for you."

Ann immediately replied, "It is nothing to what I deserve—nothing to what Christ suffered for me."

A few days after this, her grandmother, perceiving that she was sinking rapidly, said to her,—

"Ann, the Almighty is able to raise you up to health; or, if he has otherwise determined, he is able to conduct you to a world of happiness."

"Yes," was her immediate reply; "yes, and glory be to Jesus, my Saviour!"

Eight or ten days before her death, her mind seemed somewhat clouded and depressed. The Lord was evidently revealing to her more of the evil of sin. There was a hymn that she recollected having heard, although she had

Ann's peaceful death.

not committed it to memory. She wished her mother to read it to her again and again. The hymn was the following:—

“O for a closer walk with God!
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb,” &c.

About half an hour before she ceased to breathe, she intimated a wish that this hymn might be read to her. It was; and while the fourth verse was being read,—

“Return, O heavenly Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest,”

she smiled, laying her fingers upon her breast, as much as to say, “I now feel his holy and peaceful influence within.”

She then closed her eyes, and lay for a while. Her mother went to her bedside, and said, gently,—

“Ann, my dear, do you still know me?”

She opened her eyes, and replied by a faint smile.

“I fear,” continued her mother, “I fear that you will soon leave us; do you feel willing and resigned to go?”

“Yes, yes,” was her reply.

Shortly after, she clasped her hands together, as if in prayer, and said aloud, “O God receive——”

Her breath had left her motionless body before the petition was concluded, and doubtless her soul was received into the rest of the blessed.

It was early in the morning that the liberated spirit of little Ann winged its way to the bright abodes of everlasting peace. Late in the afternoon of the next day, there was assembled, in the lowly habitation of her mother, a solemn group, made up principally of Sunday-school teachers, to pay the last offices of respect to the remains of one in relation to whom the hope was confidently cherished that she slept in Jesus. The scene and circumstances I distinctly recollect. In that retired, lowly room,

Reflections at the funeral.

where Ann had breathed her last breath, and where her body, enclosed in a plain coffin, now lay in all the quietness of death, there was a deep and solemn feeling pervading the whole group that were assembled on this occasion. We all felt that the presence of God was there. The voice of prayer seemed to open many deep gushing fountains of sensibility. We could not but look up with gratitude, and wonder, and adoring love, to our heavenly Father, that, in the death of this young Christian, he had given such an evidence of his gracious favour towards our Sunday-school. We then felt, as we kneeled down to thank him for his mercy, that if no other good had been done, or ever should be done, by our efforts in the Sunday-school, that there was already conferred upon us an abundant remuneration for all our labour and toil. One soul was now before the throne, chanting the high praises of God, that might have been in the regions of wailing and wo, but for this our humble instrumentality. When we thought of Ann, now delivered for ever from pain and sorrow—from the buffetings of the world and the temptations of sin; when, with the eye of faith, we followed her up to the bright and everlasting hills whither she had gone, and thought of all the glories and the blessedness that surrounded the throne of God and the Lamb, we dried up our tears, and praised the Lord for his goodness. We felt that the sources of consolation were so rich and abundant that even her bereaved mother ought not to weep. There had been conferred upon her child a greater benefit than it was possible for all the treasures of earth to procure for her. Had those Sunday-school teachers possessed such wealth and influence, that they could have placed Ann in circumstances where she would have enjoyed the highest literary advantages, and acquired the most finished education; had they been able to have thrown within her reach an immense fortune, so that she could have passed her days in ease and splendour, they would have done far less for her than they had already done by leading her to the feet of Jesus. Had her child, through

The beatific state.

Goodness of God.

the instrumentality of those Sunday-school teachers, been advanced to the highest pitch of intellectual culture, or elevated to the loftiest pinnacle of human distinction, that widowed mother would have had far less reason for gratitude and thankfulness than she now had. The education of her child was now complete. Ann, now that the bands of mortality had burst from around her, knew vastly more than the wisest of those who lingered on the earth. Already had she been admitted into the society of angels and just men made perfect. Already had she put on robes of glory, and was shining like a star in the firmament of heaven. She was where the inhabitants no more say, I am sick; where sin and sorrow never enter; where all is joy, and love, and peace, and holiness. There was enough in these reflections not only to dry up a mother's tears, but to fill her heart with gratitude, and her mouth with songs of praise. When she thought where her child was—and how much better provided for, than she could have been, were she still on the earth—she could not refrain from feeling something of the power of that pious sentiment, which, in one of Zion's sacred songs, is distinctly reiterated twenty-six times within the compass of as many verses, and that without the slightest approach to vain repetition. “*O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*” In our past history, how many thousand instances can we recount of God's loving-kindness to us; and surely under each one of these we ought to write—*He is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

While in the midst of this humble funeral group, with my heart filled with calm and holy thoughts, I could not but be forcibly reminded of another scene, that a few days previous I had witnessed. *That* was also a funeral scene—but how different from this! Then we were in the mansion of wealth. The indications of pomp and splendour met the eye at every turn. All the spacious apartments of the extended dwelling were thrown open, and were now

The funeral of one of earth's admired children.

filled to overflowing. Scarfs, and sable weeds, and all the external insignia of mourning, were there. A long train of carriages, reaching for more than a half of a mile, were in waiting to follow the senseless clay to its low and long resting place in the cemetery. She, for whom all this parade was making, had gone to eternity without leaving the slightest evidence that her peace was made with God. She was the indulged child of wealthy parents. Every expense had been lavished upon her education; and she had just now entered upon life, young, beautiful, and accomplished. She had just begun to figure amid the brilliant circles of fashion, and all the infatuation of a mind intoxicated with the first visions of earthly pleasure was upon her, when suddenly the hand of God touched her young and apparently vigorous frame with deadly and blighting disease. She lived only a few days. And though, from the beginning, the physician warned the parents that this sickness would terminate fatally, no minister of the cross was permitted to visit that sick room; for in their tenderness for their child, those parents could not endure the thought of her being alarmed with the idea that she was going to die. Thus in their blindness, acting as they thought very tenderly, the awful secret was kept from her to the last. She knew not her danger, till she actually made the final, irrecoverable plunge into the eternal world.

While I saw all this vain pageant at her funeral, got up to soothe the feelings and gratify the pride of the living, I could not but ask myself, "With what emotions must this departed one, who, in all probability, has gone into eternity impenitent and unpardoned—with what emotions must her lost spirit look out upon all this parade made over her poor, perishing body?"

But when we saw Ann's remains borne to the grave, other feelings arose in our minds. Then we could not but think, as we saw the little procession moving on, That there is one "who sleeps in Jesus, whom God will bring with him"—there is one who will be owned "when Christ

The best wish for our children.

shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." And the thought of my heart then was, I will never seek great things for my children. I will cherish no anxieties to see them rich, and honoured, and elevated to the high places of earth ; but all that I will ask will be, to see them the subdued and regenerated children of God ; to see them set in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,—fitted for humble usefulness, and numbered with the saints in glory everlasting.

THE MEETING OF THE TRAVELLERS.

CHAPTER I.

A JOURNEY.

..... "What a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams."

THOMSON.

EVERY situation in which we are placed, and every scene through which we pass, furnishes us with new opportunities of studying the ways and wisdom of God. The great Author of our being has so framed the natural world, and so regulates its concerns, that all the objects and events which fall within the circle of our knowledge, bear impressed upon them many useful lessons of moral instruction.

The traveller, through whatever region he passes, will be able to learn, every day, something that is valuable. Unquestionably he should have a definite object for which he leaves his home, and makes his sojourn among strangers. Whether that object be business, or health, or the acquisition of knowledge, he will find in the pursuit of it much to instruct and interest him in the diversified scenes through which he passes. To acquire valuable ideas and stores of useful knowledge, it is not necessary that one

The opportunities of improvement on a journey.

should spend his evenings amid the circles of the learned, or his days among the dusty and ponderous tomes of ancient lore. In the stage-coach, or at the public inn, the traveller, while he sits taciturn and unknown, can often witness a development of human nature which he would have in vain sought in the circle of his own neighbourhood, and which may prove a valuable acquisition to his stock of knowledge.

Even he who travels without companions may find, in the mute and inanimate objects around him, much to occupy and interest his thoughts. His course for a while may be over rough roads and rugged mountains. He may have to make his way through the mire and gloom of the deep valley, while the heavens above are dark with clouds, which hang, like sable drapery, around the gathering tempest. But as he proceeds, the scene by and by will change. The surrounding country will put on a more inviting aspect. The storm will pass over, and the sky be again illumined with all the bright beams of the glorious sun.

Something like the preceding train of reflections was awakened in my mind many years since, by an excursion I had then recently made through one of the New England states, under very peculiar circumstances. Oppressed with the heat of the city, worn out with incessant toils, and enfeebled by disease, I had entered the steamboat, on a sultry morning in August, with scarcely strength enough to sit up, amid the crowd that were jostling and pressing against each other upon the deck. Though many enchanting scenes stretched before us, as we passed up the noble Hudson, entered the highlands, and caught a view of the distant Catskill, yet those scenes had little power to awaken their wonted emotions in my bosom. The next day, with scarcely power to sit steadily upon a horse, I started from the place of our landing, with no other companion, save the beast on which I rode, to try the invigorating influence of the mountain air of Vermont. As I pursued my

The incidents of a single day.Thunder storm.

route, by short stages, on the west side of the Green Mountains, I found my health gradually improving, and my heart often drawn out in sweet and delightful communion with the glorious Being that built the grand and majestic temple of nature through which I was passing. It was not all sunshine and bright enchantment around me, however. My journey, like the pathway of life, conducted me through a variety of scenes. There were dark and cloudy days; and yet they were succeeded by bright and sunny ones. The incidents of a single day will illustrate the idea that I would present to the reader.

I had been travelling for some hours over unpleasant roads, and beneath a lowering sky. The rain at length began to descend. I rode on with all speed to a neighbouring farm-house. Here I found a ready shelter for myself and horse. The country around me was wild and mountainous. On either side of me, running far to the north, were lofty ranges of bare and barren rock, rising up like immense columns, upon which two sides of the vaulted arch above seemed to rest. The sky, over head, was filled with commotion. Huge masses of dark clouds rolled one above another, and towering on high, like vast pyramids, presented a scene at once the most awful and sublime. As yet, all was still and noiseless; but soon the wind began to roar, and the voice of thunder to break upon the startled ear. O! it was then an hour of solemn interest! I felt as if I was indeed standing in the immediate presence of God, as I stood and heard peal after peal rolling from the top of the mountain to the bottom of the valley, and then answered by a thousand echoes from the neighbouring rocks and hills.

The storm, however, was but of short duration, and I was soon again on my way. As I ascended from this deep ravine, the sun suddenly broke through the clouds, and a varied and enchanting landscape opened before me.

On one side, the forest skirting down from the sloping mountain to the very margin of the road, screened and

A lovely prospect.A country school-house.

sheltered me from the glowing heat with its delightful shade. At my feet, a little rivulet of pure limpid water, gurgling along, rolled its downward way over countless pebbles of every colour, shade, and shape, washed and worn by this crystal rill that for ages had sparkled over them.

On the other side were spread out, in all their native beauty and richness, gay sunny fields, smiling beneath the bounty and blessing of the infinite Creator. Countless enclosures, with all the rural treasures they protected, met my eye at one glance, and awakened feelings of the most delightful and tranquillizing nature. *Here* the rich clover, with its ten thousand heads, nodding in the breeze, and emitting its sweet fragrance. *There* the verdant meadow—the thistly lawn—the white tasselled corn—the golden wheat—fields of grain waving in the gentle breeze, and pastures filled with herds of cattle, or white with flocks of sheep, presented a scene sweet, varied, and beautiful beyond description.

Every step I took brought some new and interesting object to my notice. Having reached the summit of the hill, a country school-house, standing by the side of the road, met my view, and started various pleasing trains of thought. The country school-house must always be an object of interest to the traveller. As I passed, I heard the young prattlers conning over their tasks, while some were reading or reciting their lessons. And I then thought how can the voices of children fall upon any ear without awakening the deepest and tenderest emotions of interest?

As I heard those childlike tones I was reminded of the infant band that I had once sought to train for the skies in the Sunday-school room; and the recollections of that holy and interesting employment came up to my memory with sweet and delightful vividness. Then too my heart throbbed with new interest as I thought of the sweet little faces that had oft looked so smilingly on me. And then I could not but weep—for the smile on those faces was now

Glorified little ones.A beautiful scene.

congealed in death. Bereavement had made me childless. One sad stroke had torn from me my little ones, and hid them in the grave. But God had done it: and in the multitude of my sorrows his comforts had refreshed my soul. As I passed on, and left behind me that humble school-room, which by the power of association had awakened these trains of reflection, and called up scenes that had past, my tenderest thoughts were fixed upon the glorified images of those dear ones in eternity. I seemed to follow them in their ascending way up to that world of blessedness whither they had gone, and to behold them with the eye of faith, clothed in robes of transcendent beauty, holding harps in their little hands, following the Lamb whithersoever he went, and swelling with their infant voices the music and the melody of heaven.

As I advanced on my journey, I at length reached a lofty eminence, from which I could look off over the tops of the trees that stood in the lowland beneath, to the rich and well cultivated country that stretched in countless fields up the precipitous sides of the mountain, exhibiting at different points the signs of culture and fertility carried to its very summit. Still more remote, in the background, appeared one range of mountains rising above another, till the most distant were lost in the clouds. Upon this beautiful scene, as cloud after cloud crossed the sun's bright disk, rested alternately light and shade.

How many delightful themes for pious meditation will such a transition of scene, and succession of objects, thought I, suggest to the mind of the solitary traveller, if God be in all his thoughts! He will be strikingly impressed with the truth that human life is but a journey—that the Christian is a pilgrim and stranger upon the earth, and his home far distant.

During every tour he makes, he passes through extensive tracts of country, where he knows not a face he meets; and where he sees hundreds engaged in pleasure, and business, in which he has neither lot nor part. So, though his course

Numerous incidents fall under the notice of the traveller.

through life be solitary, though he live in obscurity, unknown to the great, unapplauded by the multitude, yet may he still keep on in his heavenly way, and be continually approximating to the end of his journey. Though his path may sometimes be rough and difficult, and the heavens above may seem to gather blackness and frown upon him, yet if he continues to go forward, still believing, still trusting in the divine promises, a new scene of things will quickly succeed. The lustre of God's reconciled countenance will burst through the surrounding gloom, and beam resplendently upon his path, and upon all the prospect before him ; imparting celestial beauty and loveliness to every object upon which it rests. I would here also remark that there are numerous incidents falling within the notice of the traveller, which are calculated to interest him deeply.

In illustration of this remark I must again call the attention of the reader to an occurrence connected with this journey of which I have already given him some account. It was only a few days after the occurrence of the incidents just before referred to, that I found myself just at sunset seated in a neat parlour at a public inn, in company with several other individuals, all of whom appeared entire strangers to each other. Among the number were two ladies : the one grave and matronly in her appearance, the other more sprightly and youthful, who, as I subsequently learned, was travelling under the escort of her brother, a young gentleman not more than sixteen or eighteen years old, whose modest and taciturn habits, and unobtrusive manners, made us, during a long and animated conversation, almost unconscious of his presence, till a certain occasion called forth a display of the brilliant powers of his extraordinary mind. The young lady's name was *Cornelia Trueman*. The other lady gave us as her address, *Mrs. Janeway*.

Another individual in this group was an intelligent and gentlemanly man, whose name I afterwards learnt to be

The company at an inn.

Colchester. This constituted the entire company in the midst of whom I found myself seated at the time just alluded to. Every thing around and within the public house appeared remarkably quiet, there being no other guests for the night except those above described. In the common parlour where we were all seated, there was with each one an apparent backwardness in entering upon any thing like general conversation. To this remark, however, I must make one exception. Mr. Colchester, who was evidently of an affable turn, seemed determined to encourage and promote a free interchange of thoughts and opinions. He had already made several efforts to draw us into conversation, which had proved unavailing.

I sat by the window leaning on my arm, looking at the distant mountain, from which the last rays of reflected light were fading.

"There has been a great and fearful disaster on the other side of the mountain," said Mr. C——, still persisting in his attempt to promote sociability, and directing his discourse to me.

"I had not heard of it," said I, starting from my abstracted posture, and turning towards him.

"Many lives have been lost, and much property destroyed," continued he.

This last remark drew the attention of the whole company towards him, and the request was instantly made that he would favour us with the particulars of the catastrophe to which he alluded. To this he readily assented.

CHAPTER II.

THE INUNDATION.

Thou didst blow with thy wind ; the sea covered them.
They sank as lead in the mighty waters.

From the 15th of Exodus.

“NEW HAVEN river,” said Mr. Colchester, entering upon the description with the ease and fluency of one accustomed to communicate his thoughts to others, “New Haven river has its source among the mountains of Bristol and Lincoln. Its course, for a while, is precipitous and rapid, leaping down rocky shelves, and roaring amid the wild solitudes through which it passes, till at length, emerging from the mountains, it winds with a swift current through an open country. At New Haven West Mills, or Beman Hollow, the tract of interval land through which the stream passes is narrowed, and the stream itself is hemmed in by precipitous banks, and ranges of hills on either side, forming, as one would think, an impassable barrier against the swelling waters, until they are lost in Otter creek, about a mile below this point.

“At Beman Hollow, a little hamlet had been gradually formed, from the advantages the place afforded for establishing mills and manufactories. Some of the houses were built near the margin of the river ; others, more remote, on the sloping sides of the hill.

“On the 26th of ———, the stream, in consequence of heavy rains, had risen unusually high, so that some of the inhabitants in the neighbourhood became alarmed, and left their dwellings. Those, however, who lived farther back

Preparation for death.

Scene in Beman Hollow.

from the stream were free from all apprehensions of evil, and retired to their rest, that evening, with a feeling of perfect security.

“How true it is, that every night when we lay our head upon our pillow, we ought to be prepared to awake in eternity! If it were consistent with the divine will, I, for myself, should desire to have some previous intimation of the approach of that solemn event which closes the scene of our probation, and introduces us into the immediate and unveiled presence of the Judge Eternal. To my mind, there is something awful and terrific in the manner in which the Egyptians perished in the Red Sea:—carrying in their hands the weapons of death—burning with rage, and thirst for blood; and now having the spoil almost within their grasp, God, with his breath, dissolved the subtle and mysterious chain that bound each drop in the upright wall to its kindred drop, and, in an instant, the mighty waters rushed back, and swept them all into eternity.

“And nothing but the conflagration of the last day can exceed the awful and appalling scene which must have been exhibited, when the inhabitants of the old world, unaffected by all the solemn warnings of God, continued to *eat and drink, and marry, and give in marriage; and knew not until the flood came and took them all away.*

“The inhabitants of that once delightful glen, which I have just described, also had had warning from a divine messenger. There had been often read to them, from the sacred volume, this admonition: *Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.* It was indeed an hour in which all apprehensions were laid asleep. It was the solemn hour of midnight. The scenes of nature lay wrapped in silence and repose through the vale of Beman Hollow. No sounds were heard but the rough and hoarse waters of the swollen stream. Thick and impenetrable darkness was spread over the entire glen. The clouds were collecting on the mountains above, in dense and fearful masses. Soon the *rains descended, and*

The devastation.

Touching facts.

the floods came. The dams, up to the very source of the stream, one after another, gave way ; and mills and manufactories fell before the mighty rush of waters. The swollen river, acquiring increased momentum as it advanced, swept every thing before it. The inhabitants of Beman Hollow, although all unconscious of their danger until it burst upon them, did not escape. Houses and barns, and sleeping families were carried away, and involved in the general destruction.

“ I arrived at this scene of devastation the day succeeding this general catastrophe. A more affecting scene I have seldom witnessed. A daughter of Mr. Wilson, the head of one of the families that had been swept away, having been absent that awful night, had just reached the spot, and was looking towards the place where, the day before, had stood her father’s dwelling, and her own sweet home.

“ Who can conceive her agony of feeling, as she stood with clenched hands, pallid cheek, and trembling frame, and, with a countenance upon which was depicted almost frantic emotion, turned first this way and then that, asking again and again, *Where are they? My dear, dear mother, where is she?*

“ Alas ! we could only weep, and point to the scene of ruin before us.

“ There are some touching facts connected with the destruction of the Wilson family, worthy of a more detailed and particular description. They were not apprehensive of any evil until it was too late to escape. Upon the first intimation of danger, the whole family rose and hastily dressed themselves. But, before they could well do this, they perceived that their dwelling was rocking upon its foundation. Soon the chimney fell in, and the house actually floated upon the water. Mr. Wilson and his eldest son rushed to the door, plunged into the stream, and succeeded in reaching an elevated point of land which was still above the water.

Fruitless efforts of the father to rescue his perishing child.

“They had scarcely placed their feet upon the solid earth, when they heard a tremendous crash. Looking back, they could faintly discover, through the thick mists of night, that their dwelling had, by the violence of the water, been riven in twain, and that it now formed two separate wrecks. From each of these floating wrecks, they could distinctly hear the cries and shrieks of terror and despair.

“At this moment, the immense quantity of timber that had been borne down, became so entangled in one mass, as to occasion a temporary obstruction below. The course of the waters was checked, and one part of Mr. Wilson’s house drifted near the point where he stood. Upon this he discovered his daughter. She was calling to him for help in tones the most piteous and heartrending.

“Procuring a rope, he again plunged into the flood, and swam to the wreck upon which his daughter was floating. There, amid the howlings of the storm, and the roar of the waters, he lifted up his voice again and again, and bid his child seize the rope which he threw out to her. But, either deafened by the surrounding tumults, she heard him not, or paralyzed with fear, she found herself incapable of making any effort to extricate herself from this perilous situation. While the agonized father was making these fruitless efforts to rescue his perishing child, the obstruction below suddenly gave way, and all were swept down by the resistless waters.

“It was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Wilson again reached the land; and it was just in time to hear a confused shriek, as the fractured timber and crushed bodies of his wife and children were hurried down the precipitous current. His eye could not follow them; for over their course hung thick and terrible darkness. His imagination was left to picture the worst.

“At this very moment, in another part of the valley, was exhibited another scene no less awful and melancholy. In a retired, but somewhat exposed spot, stood the humble

The fearful catastrophe.

dwelling of Nathan Stewart. Enfeebled by age, and helpless through the entire loss of his sight, he was but ill-prepared to weather the perils of that night. Hearing the roar of the contending elements without, he called up his family, that they might, if possible, escape the destruction which his fears too truly foreboded^d was at hand. But it was too late. Their dwelling already stood in the midst of a sea.

“ In this hour, when made to feel in so awful a manner the impotence of human strength, they betook themselves to that God who ruleth on high, and is mightier than the angry flood, or the horribly raging deep. The mother called around her her seven children, and read from the word of God, and then committed herself and her family to the Most High in an act of solemn prayer.

“ One of their neighbours, a Mr. Eldridge, knowing their defenceless situation, and prompted by the kindest feelings, constructed a raft, and having manned it with himself and son, succeeded in reaching Mr. Stewart’s house in safety. His object was to remove the family upon the raft ; but he had scarcely reached their dwelling before he and they were all swept away by the resistless waters. Mr. Eldridge ultimately escaped with his life ; but his son accompanied the Stewart family in their voyage to eternity.

“ When the morning dawned, the whole valley wore the most gloomy and desolate aspect. One wide scene of water and devastation stretched before the astonished eye. Here and there clung a few individuals to the branches of trees, almost senseless through terror and exhaustion. Among the number was a lad of ten or twelve years old, the only survivor, I believe, in the Stewart family. The account that he gave of the occurrences of the preceding night was brief and simple. He was unconscious of most that had past. The last thing he remembered was, that his mother took down the Bible and read a chapter. She kneeled down with another book before her, and began to

pray, and then the house began to reel and move. As to what passed after this he had no distinct recollection.

“Near the spot, drifted to the shore,” continued our narrator, “I found this Prayer Book,” taking a dingy-looking, water-soaked volume from his pocket,—“and I have no doubt this is the very book which Mrs. Stewart had before her when kneeling, as just described, to offer up her last prayer. I shall long keep this, as a sacred memento of the awful occurrences that have rendered memorable Beman Hollow.”

This incidental mention of the *Prayer Book* led to a conversation, which in its progress disclosed the somewhat singular fact that the whole company were members of the Episcopal church. I presume the Christian reader, after having been long absent from his home, as he has chanced to discover in the stage-coach, the packet-boat, or the public inn, a professed follower of Christ, has felt his heart immediately drawn towards him in fraternal affection: yea, from that moment has felt as though he had at least one friend near him. If from farther conversation he has learned, that he was attached to the same communion with himself, he has felt that he was in the society of one who had kindred sympathies with him in matters of the highest interest. All reserve is thrown off, and heart meets heart in sweet and delightful fellowship.

It was very much so with the company on the present occasion. Indeed, they soon became as communicative and affable, as they had previously been reserved and taciturn. Perhaps Episcopalians are more inclined to talk about their church than most Christians. Whether this is wise, I will not now stay to inquire. There are two reasons that may be assigned for the fact.

First, they attach more importance to the form of the early organization of the church, than most other denominations. They believe that Christ gave a definite form to the church, and they feel bound to adhere strictly to that.

And, *Secondly*, being often assailed in relation to the

Surprise and pleasure.

peculiarities of their communion, they have been constrained to study their own organization thoroughly, and make themselves very familiar with the reason of every thing connected with their church.

It was not wonderful, therefore, that meeting under the circumstances that these strangers did, under the surprise and pleasure of finding themselves all attached to this communion, they should have poured out their hearts very freely on a variety of topics connected with the interests of the Episcopal church.

A sketch of the remarks offered by three of these individuals will give an idea of the lively and animated discussion that took place, and may furnish several valuable hints for reflection.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORCE OF PREJUDICE.

How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.
From the 133d Psalm.

WITH all that may be said in reference to the advantages resulting from the division of the Christian church into sects and denominations, we cannot but think that it is contrary to the will of Christ, and productive of immense evils. It is well known that, in consequence of this division, these various denominations do in fact often look upon each other with suspicion and jealousy, and regard each other as rivals and enemies. It is this which "supplies infidels with their most plausible topics of invective, which hardens the conscience of the irreligious, weakens the hands of the good, impedes the efficacy of prayer, and is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Spirit, which is essential to the renovation of the world."*

While we must mourn over this state of things in the Christian church, we still feel bound to subscribe entirely to the remark, "That every attempt to reconcile differences among professing Christians, which involves the relinquishment of truth, or a compromise with important corruption either in doctrine or worship, or giving countenance to what is deemed injurious departure from what Christ has commanded, is, undoubtedly, criminal and mischievous.†

We are, however, inclined to think that much of the

* Robert Hall's Works, vol. i. p. 289.

† Biblical Repertory, vol. viii. p. 15.

The effect of a spirit of bitterness among Christians.

acerbity of feeling, which has hitherto prevailed among evangelical Christians of different denominations, has been owing to their ignorance of each other. The more knowledge that real Christians have of each other, the more they will be drawn towards each other by the attractive power of sympathy and Christian love.

A variety of causes concurred to cast a shade over the Episcopal church, in its first establishment in this country. When I reflect upon the low state of piety in many of its members at that period, the darkened and imperfect views of the gospel which many of its ministers evinced, and the spirit of intolerance which the mother church of England manifested towards the Puritans, I do not wonder that the descendants of the Puritans felt and acted towards the Episcopal church as they did. And yet it is abundantly evident, that the Episcopal church has had heaped on her a prodigious amount of calumny, and that her noblest energies have been crippled by unfounded prejudices, which have girded her around like a beleaguering army, and pursued her with almost a spirit of relentless extermination. Those days of error and misconception we trust are fast passing away. It would be well if Christians more frequently would reflect upon the evil effects that result from manifesting a spirit of bitterness towards each other, and would adopt the sentiment contained in the lines which Milton represents Adam as addressing to Eve, after their mutual accusations and upbraidings.

“ But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere ; but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of wo.”

And perhaps the discussion that took place on the occasion of the meeting of these travellers, may tend to show the folly and the sin of cherishing feelings of unkindness and opposition towards those whom Christ loves, and with whom we shall dwell together in life everlasting.

Narrative of Miss Truman.

In the course of the conversation referred to at the close of the last chapter, the remark had been dropped that numbers were deterred from frequenting the worshipping assemblies of the Episcopal church, under the mistaken impression that its liturgical services were a frigid mummary of words, or a sort of pantomime, greatly resembling the Romish masses, and utterly destitute of the spirit and warmth of true devotion. This remark called forth a spirited reply from Miss Truman, who, while scarce aware of it, gave a sketch of her own personal history.

It must be borne in mind that Miss Truman, in these remarks, spoke with all the warmth of one who had entered the Episcopal church from a deep conviction that it was her duty to do so ; and who, in following what she supposed to be her duty, had to wade through a sea of difficulties, and encounter a host of almost indomitable resistances.

Young, ardent, and sanguine in her temperament, her eye kindled with animation, and the words flowed with an uncommon grace and fluency from her lips. The remark just adverted to had touched a sensitive chord in her bosom. And she very promptly said,—

“Such a view is utterly at war with facts and experience. I might refer to my own case for an ample refutation of such an idea.

“I was born amid the rough hills and cragged mountains of New Hampshire, and drew my natal breath in a district of country where the Episcopal church was never mentioned but with censure and denunciation. My parents were the descendants of Puritans ; and they cherished all the bitterness and strong antipathies to *the church of England*, as the Episcopal church was called, which their ancestors brought with them, when, with wounded spirits and exasperated feeling, they bade an eternal adieu to the land that gave them birth.

“As there was no Episcopal church in my native town, it was but seldom that the distinctive views and peculiari-

Injurious impressions on the minds of the young.

ties of this denomination were made the subject of conversation. At times, however, something would occur to introduce the mention of *the church of England*, and at such times the remarks offered were calculated to give the impression that it was a church utterly destitute of piety ; embracing within its communion every species of profligate and abandoned men, and in its worship and doctrines not a whit behind the idolatrous church of Rome.

“ Was it to be wondered at, that I, then a child, and hearing these statements from the lips of those I tenderly loved, received them as undoubted truths ? And here I cannot but remark, that I do think it most unwarrantable conduct in parents, to speak in terms of censure and condemnation, in the presence of children, of religious communions of which they are totally ignorant. How many young minds have been thus poisoned, perverted, and for ever blinded to the perception of truth ! And I might also add, still more reprehensible is the habit, in which some very good people indulge themselves, of ridiculing and mimicking the tone, voice, and singular expressions of weak or fanatical teachers. I cannot but think, that such attempts at ridicule are always injurious to personal piety, and often prejudice young minds against all religion. And ought not parents, and those to whom the care of youth is committed, to remember that there is an awful responsibility in relation to this matter ? the eternal Judge himself having thus premonished us, *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

“ My parents, I am fully persuaded, acted in this matter under the honest belief, that all, and more than they affirmed of the Episcopal church, was literally true. But they should have remembered, that all the knowledge they possessed on this subject was traditionary,—a species of information very much to be distrusted when connected with the excited feelings and passions of men.

“ About the time I had attained the sixteenth year of my age, my father concluded to emigrate to the state of New

Emigration.

New residence.

York. After a long and somewhat tedious journey, we at length stopped at one of those little villages which have sprung up, as it were by enchantment, on the banks of the great Western Canal ; and here, after some deliberation, my parents concluded to take up their residence. The scene around me was new, and I should have often pined for the sweet retirement and invigorating air of my native hills, had I not been in the bosom of my own family, enjoying the society of affectionate parents, whose presence renders any spot dear and interesting.

“ I verily believe the hand of God was in this matter, and to the latest period of my life, I shall remember with deep gratitude that act of divine providence which located us in the village of L——. In this village there were a Methodist and a Congregational church. These were the only religious denominations known as distinct bodies there.

“ Two years had now elapsed since we first took up our abode in the village of L——. We had begun to acquire a home-like feeling, to take an interest in the place, and listen with attention to every little item of intelligence connected with its growth and prosperity. Its moral and religious institutions, as they rose or declined, were regarded with deep interest, and made the subject of frequent conversation.

“ It was not to be expected that an event of so exciting a character, as that of *the celebrating of worship according to the forms and usages of the Episcopal church*, for the first time in our village, should pass unnoticed, or fail to furnish a subject for abundant remark in every family circle. It certainly did not in ours.

“ It was one Saturday morning, just after we had taken our seats around the breakfast table, that my father remarked,

“ ‘ I understand we are to have Episcopal preaching here next Sabbath.’

“ I perceived, when my father first began to speak, that

The Episcopal church, how viewed.

there was a sort of knitting of the brow, and sternness of expression, which sometimes clouded his features when any thing greatly displeased him.

“ ‘Episcopal preaching!’ reiterated my mother, who was truly a pious woman, but ardent in her feelings, and very fixed in her prejudices. ‘Episcopal preaching! are there any of that corrupt people among us?’

“ ‘A few, I believe,’ answered my father.

“ ‘Well,’ said my mother, ‘I hope those who have been better taught, will not, by their attendance, give sanction or encouragement to the propagation of doctrines, which cannot fail to weaken the foundation of morals, and cause men to feel easy and secure in their sins. At all events, I hope that *my* children will have so much regard to the feelings of their parents as not to put themselves in the way of error and delusion, remembering the monitory precept of the wise man—*Enter not in the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it; pass not by it. Turn from it, and pass away.*’

“These remarks suddenly checked a train of thought that I was at the moment indulging. At the first mention of the foregoing intelligence, I felt a sort of undefinable curiosity come over me to go and hear this Episcopal preacher. But this last remark of my mother put to flight every thought of the kind. For I loved her too well to think of acting so directly contrary to her wishes merely to gratify an idle curiosity. I therefore dismissed the subject from my mind, and it did not again occur to me until some weeks after, when I casually heard, from an acquaintance of ours, that the Rev. Mr. D——, the Episcopal minister, preached with great acceptance, and gave such universal satisfaction, that he had been strongly solicited to repeat his visit; and that there was some prospect that he would hereafter devote a certain portion of his time to our village, as he was acting in the capacity of a missionary.

“I suppose that full three months passed away before any thing further occurred to recall this subject to my mind.

The occurrence of a Sunday morning.Mode of worship.

One Sunday morning, having dressed myself at an early hour for church, I went out, and strolled leisurely along towards the place where I usually attended public worship. It was a lovely summer's morning; and I was allured by the freshness and fragrance exhaled from the green beauteous earth, and diffused through the bland and balmy air, to prolong my walk, and take the most circuitous course to the church. Indulging in a sort of delightful revery, and almost unconscious whither I was going, ere I was aware of it, I found myself in the immediate vicinity of the place where the Episcopal missionary celebrated divine service. It was a school room which would contain from one hundred and fifty to two hundred persons. The congregation were now assembling, and yielding to the impulse of the moment, I turned and went in with others. So sudden was this determination formed, I hardly knew what I had done, until I found myself seated in the midst of the assembled worshippers. I then regretted extremely this rash step. I remembered the words my mother had repeated—*Avoid it; pass not by it. Turn from it, and pass away.* I was almost tempted to get up and leave the house, but feared I should attract attention by so singular a course of conduct; for I perceived that many of my acquaintance were in the congregation, and several families of the highest respectability. I confess I felt wretched, and sat uneasy and impatient until the service commenced.

“At length the missionary entered the room. His appearance was grave and devout; but my mind was preoccupied with prejudice, and I sat waiting in expectation of witnessing ceremonies of worship scarcely less profane or offensive to God, than the unhallowed rites performed in pagan temples. Conceive then my surprise, conceive my astonishment, when, at the commencement of the service, instead of any thing light or indecorous, the sublime and solemn words fell upon my ear, *The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.* And at the sound of these words, the whole congregation rose, and

Impressions made by the use of the church service.

stood ready to give the most profound and respectful attention to what should follow. I involuntarily rose with them, and throughout the whole service found myself almost unconsciously observing the same attitudes with the worshippers, so natural and accordant with propriety are all those various postures the Prayer Book directs us to assume during the solemn service it prescribes.

“As the service advanced, my mind was drawn into a most serious and thoughtful frame. The deepest solemnity pervaded the whole assembly. It seemed as if the Eternal Spirit hovered over the spot: and the thought was continually in my mind, *Surely this is none other than the house of God!*

“I never before experienced similar sensations, or had such solemn and affecting views. The thought occurred to me—God is indeed here! But, O! how unworthy am I to stand in His awful presence! My own past misconduct and numberless transgressions now started up before my mind, and seemed ready, as so many witnesses, to give in their testimony against me. The divine law struck me in an entire new light. It now seemed so pure, and elevated, and holy, that I did not dare to compare a single act of my life with it. I plainly perceived that I was guilty, and should be condemned. I felt that I could in sincerity join with the surrounding worshippers in their address to the throne of grace,

“*O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.*

“This humble and penitential language was exactly suited to the state of my feelings: for I now *felt*, for the first time, that I was a *sinner*. I always supposed and acknowledged that I was a sinner, but I never understood the meaning of that word until now. So much was I affected by the thoughts of my own condition, and the solemnity of the service, that when the minister came to that part of the litany, where the bleeding Lamb of God is twice invoked for *peace* and *mercy*, I could no longer

The first sermon heard.Great salvation.

restrain my feelings, but had to give vent to them in a flood of tears. There is something inimitably tender and touching in that appeal to the Second Person in the Trinity,

“O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.”

“All that I saw and heard throughout the whole service, seemed calculated to deepen my serious impressions. I verily believe that the Spirit of the living God was then touching my heart, and opening my eyes through the solemn services of the liturgy.

“My mind had now become prepared to attend to a preached gospel; and this I must say was the *first* sermon I ever heard. Whether it was because my mind had received new light, or the truths of the gospel were presented in a different manner before me, one thing is certain, religion appeared quite another thing from what I had been in the habit of contemplating it. The minister made no attempt to shine, or set himself off, but appeared totally absorbed in his subject. He spoke with a pathos and feeling which went to the heart. His language was so plain, his style so perspicuous, his feelings so fervid, and his manner so earnest and vehement, that it was impossible not to listen and understand. His text was,—*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* He depicted our lost estate without a Saviour, the greatness of the salvation purchased by the precious blood of Christ, and the tremendous guilt incurred by neglecting that salvation, in colours that seemed to exhibit these truths in an entire new light.

“I went home oppressed with feelings of wretchedness and misery. I intimated to no one where I had been, or what I had seen and heard. My mother was in feeble health, and seldom able to go out to church. Instead of occupying a place in the family pew, I usually sat with the choir of singers in the gallery, as is customary in the country with those who have good voices. My absence from the sanctuary where I had been accustomed to worship, therefore, was not observed. After this occurrence I uni-

Seriousness.

Prayer meeting.

The liturgy.

formly attended worship with the Episcopal congregation, when their minister officiated, which was only once in two weeks. I felt my heart constantly drawn to that humble school-room, where I first received those convictions of sin and desires after God, which were now continually present with me. For there alone did I hear a language which I could understand.

“My seriousness and new interest in divine things did not escape the notice of my acquaintance, although I never spoke upon the subject. Several religious people took occasion to converse with me in reference to the concerns of my soul, and, I believe, left me under the impression that my heart had been touched by the softening influence of divine grace. Shortly after this, I was invited to spend an evening at Mr. R——’s, this family having previously shown much interest in my spiritual welfare. I there met a number of religious people, and the evening was principally occupied in social prayer. My mind was peculiarly depressed. I had been all that day thinking of my exceeding sinfulness, and the certainty that destruction would overtake me; for I saw no way of escape. The meeting was truly a solemn one. When the circumstances of my seriousness came to be known, it was generally supposed that it was particularly connected with this prayer meeting. Little did they understand the instrument which God had employed in awakening my soul to the importance of eternal things. Little did they imagine that it was the prayers of that liturgy, which they deemed utterly destitute of devotion, and the spirit of genuine piety.

“A few Sundays after this, as I sat listening to the Episcopal missionary, my eye accidentally fell upon a countenance, the sight of which sent a momentary dizziness through my brain, and made my whole frame shake with trembling. It was the countenance of my dear, my venerated father! What could have brought him to this assembly? Was he aware that I was present? These thoughts instantly rushed into my mind.

The father and daughter mutually surprised.

“I looked steadfastly towards him. His eye seemed chained to the speaker; and I could see from the workings of his face, that deep feeling had been aroused in his bosom. As I continued to look, the big tear rolled down his cheek. It had been called forth by the solemn appeal from the lips of the preacher.

“I felt interested in the sermon; but I could not keep my eyes from my father. At length his eyes met mine, and the look of recognition which was exchanged showed that it was a most unexpected meeting to us both. I went home, fully determined to have no further concealments, but to apprize my parents immediately of the course upon which I had resolved.

“I expected that my father, as soon as I reached home, would speak to me on the subject of wandering from my own church. But I did not meet him till tea-time, and then he was unusually taciturn. My resolution, however, was taken. I wished to do my duty, and I felt that deception, under any circumstances, was wrong.

“I therefore remarked,—

“ ‘Father, you saw me at the Episcopal church; I hope you do not disapprove of my conduct.’

“My father remained silent, and I instantly perceived that he was too much agitated to reply. This remark, however, fell upon my poor mother’s ear like an unexpected peal of thunder. She looked upon departure from the doctrine and church in which she had been educated, as apostasy from Christ. With agitated voice, and in tones of disapprobation and surprise, she therefore hastily inquired,—

“ ‘You have not both, I trust, wandered so far from the path of duty as to leave the sanctuary of the Lord, on the holy Sabbath, and go into an assembly of Episcopal worshippers?’

“ ‘We were both, this afternoon, my dear mother,’ I replied, ‘in the Episcopal congregation; and, I trust, with profit to our souls.’

“ ‘Cornelia!’ exclaimed my mother with increased agitation, ‘I had hoped for a more dutiful course of conduct from you. And what gives me the greatest pain is, that you expect to derive any spiritual advantage from visits to those deluded assemblies. Quickly, my child, will all your seriousness vanish, if you can no longer *endure sound doctrine*, but with *itching ears* and idle curiosity you thus *heap to yourself teachers*, who have never been taught of God.’

“ ‘My much-loved mother,’ said I, with a heart ready to burst with feeling, ‘if I ever had any seriousness, it was awakened in that assembly which you warn me to avoid; and if I ever have been brought to view myself aright, it has been through the instructions of that minister whom you denounce. Do not judge so harshly.’

“ ‘Poor deluded girl!’ uttered my mother.

“ ‘Here my father interposed, and said,—

“ ‘My dear, you know the answer to the inquiry, *Can any thing good come out of Nazareth?* was, *Come and see*. I have to-day acted upon this principle; and I feel bound to say, that it is my firm belief that the Episcopal minister preaches the truth of God.’

“ ‘Well,’ said my mother, ‘what is their preaching as long as they have no other worship than a cold, heartless form of prayer?’

“ ‘Have you ever heard those prayers?’ said I.

“ ‘No; but I have been told what they are, and that is enough,’ said my mother.

“ ‘Here our conversation was broken off by the call of a friend. The next day I received a visit from the Episcopal missionary, the Rev. Mr. D——. This was quite unexpected. But he remarked, that, having observed me constantly at church, he had called to speak to me in relation to the things that concerned my everlasting peace, as he did upon all whom he saw regular attendants upon his ministry.

“ ‘I thanked him for his kindness, and made some in-

The Prayer Book.

quiries in relation to the Prayer Book. He very readily, and in the most kind and condescending manner, gave me the information I requested, and concluded his remarks upon the subject by begging me to accept a copy of the Prayer Book.

“And here I cannot but bear my testimony to the usefulness and unquestionable charity of those benevolent institutions, formed for the purpose of supplying missionaries with Bibles and Prayer Books, to distribute through the congregations where they officiate. It is impossible to estimate or compute the amount of good thus accomplished. Did those engaged in this benevolent object, know how many broken hearts their charity binds up—how many weak and wavering minds it confirms in the faith—how many death-beds it smooths, and how many departing spirits it fits for glory, their hands would never be weary, their hearts would never faint in this good work.

“The Prayer Book, offered me by Mr. D——, I most cheerfully received. I had long been desirous of having one in my possession; for I expected to derive from the perusal of this book much light and instruction in relation to several subjects which were still enveloped in mist and darkness. Some inquiries that I made gave Mr. D—— a clue to my difficulties. In the most kind and obliging manner, he directed my attention to numerous passages of Scripture, which shed much illumination upon my benighted mind. The way of salvation was opened up before me in a new and striking light.

“As soon as Mr. D—— left, I went to my chamber, and there, through divine grace, was enabled to cast my naked soul upon the mercies of God in Christ. I now, for the first time, felt *peace and joy in believing*. I could now see how the mercy of God could be extended even to me, and the discovery filled me with *joy unspeakable and full of glory*.

“Having dedicated myself anew to God, I sat down to examine my precious treasure—*my Prayer Book*. Not

to enlarge upon the satisfaction I derived from its perusal, I will barely advert to one discovery I made in its every page. I had just heard, from the lips of him whom Providence seemed to have sent me as a spiritual guide, that I must look for salvation only in and through Christ; that I must come to him as a lost and ruined sinner, and cast myself entirely upon his mediation and mercy. No one could feel more deeply than I did the need of a mediator. Conscious of my own meanness, vileness, and impurity, I could not conceive how it was possible for me, of myself alone, to have any access to the all-holy, all-glorious, and supreme Governor of the universe. It appeared to me that he was too high and too pure, and I too low and polluted for such a converse. I most painfully felt the need of one through whom I could communicate with God, and by whose intercession I could hope that my poor petitions would be accepted. I had just been pointed to such a Mediator—Jesus Christ the righteous. And now I found him and his mediatorial character recognised in every *petition* and *Collect*, and forming the very groundwork of the Prayer Book.

“The occurrences to which I have previously adverted created much uneasiness, and, I may say, unhappiness, in our family circle for a few days. My father had been affected by the services of the liturgy in a manner very similar to myself. Filled with alarm on account of the sinfulness of his heart and life, to the perception of which he had now become painfully awakened, he was but ill prepared to allay the anxiety and apprehensions of my worthy mother, who was exceedingly distressed at the thought of her family’s apostatizing from the truth. She was at length, however, through my father’s importunity, brought to consent to attend the Episcopal church, and see and hear for herself.

“During the following week, she said nothing from which I could learn how her mind was affected by what she had witnessed. Before the next Sunday, however,

The indefatigable missionary.

The artificial pond.

The little ark.

the Rev. Mr. D—— gave us another call. This indefatigable missionary, truly in earnest in his work, and well aware that he could do as much, if not more, in the family circle than in the pulpit, was ever prompt in seizing every opportunity to deepen serious impressions and dissipate prejudice by the most familiar and friendly conversation.

“It so happened that all our family were now present; and Mr. D——’s manners were so kind, gentlemanly, and conciliating, that we were immediately constrained to feel that he was our friend. By a most happy faculty which he possessed, the conversation, almost before we were conscious of it, had assumed a religious character; and the remarks of Mr. D—— now became deeply interesting from the simplicity and honest-hearted piety that characterized them.

“It was summer, and the parlour in which we were sitting opened immediately into a large garden in the rear of the house. In one part of this garden had been formed an artificial pond. This little expanse of water not only added beauty to the rural scene in which it was imbosomed, but afforded a theatre for sport and amusement to my brothers. They had constructed a little vessel, formed upon the model of Noah’s ark, and which they denominated the Ark.

“Mr. D—— had taken a seat by the window which overlooked this whole scene, and made several inquiries in relation to the arrangements in the garden.

“‘You are indeed delightfully situated,’ he remarked. ‘You have so many sweet instructors around you! These plants, and flowers, and trees, and shrubs, and birds that sing among their branches, are telling of God and his goodness all the day long. I love the scenes of nature, because I see so much of God in them. And even your children have selected for their sport an object of striking moral significancy. The little ark that floats upon the crystal bosom of that water, not only reminds you of that disastrous event which engulfed this whole earth in one wide and watery grave, but also of a worse and more wasteful

Religious impressions on Mr. Truman's mind.

flood—a flood of guilt, which has rolled its polluting tide over all the generations of men, and swallowed them up in its deep and absorbing bosom. And as none of the inhabitants of the old world escaped, except those who entered the ark—so none will now escape, except those who are in Christ. He is the only ark of safety to which we can flee. And, O! is it not madness in us, when he has so graciously provided a way for our escape—when he so kindly opens the door and bids us enter—is it not madness in us to linger and loiter until the flood comes and takes us all away?’

“My father was much affected by these remarks. He observed to Mr. D—— that he feared that he had, through life, been deaf to the monitory voices around him. ‘It has been my endeavour,’ continued he, ‘to promote the interests of religion, and lead an incorrupt life. But I now begin to think that I have never known myself. I was educated with strong prejudices against the Episcopal church. I always viewed it as a church the lowest of all others in piety. But it has pleased God to touch my heart under your ministry, and to show me that I am under condemnation and death.’

“‘This,’ said Mr. D——, ‘is what the church and her faithful ministers aim at. We do not preach to gain proselytes. We are not ambitious to draw multitudes into our church, merely to boast of our numbers. Our great object, that for which we most earnestly labour, is to save souls; to lead men to repentance and reformation of life.

“‘It is true we believe, and conscientiously believe, that our church is the church which Christ and his apostles founded. We, therefore, feel it our duty to adhere to this church. We love it, because it is the church of Christ; and because, being established by him, we believe it embraces in its operation and ordinances the most efficient moral enginery to rescue sinners from death, and train them for the society and enjoyments of heaven. Its worship, doctrines, and sacraments are all designed, and eminently

Change of heart fully recognised in the liturgy.

calculated, to lead men to the attainment of that *holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.*'

" 'Do you consider,' inquired my mother, with some spirit, as though she suspected that all this was a nice-wrought veil to conceal a hollow and rotten system of doctrine; 'do you consider *a change of heart* necessary to entitle one to the character of a genuine Christian?'

" 'Most assuredly I do, madam,' said he, 'and I should suppose that you would have inferred this from the observations that I have already made.'

" 'Then you are different from most Episcopalians,' replied my mother.

" 'I am different from them in no other respect than that I am the most unworthy of all the members of that communion,' replied Mr. D——.

" 'But surely,' said my mother, 'Episcopalians do not generally believe in a change of heart?'

" 'You would have hardly ventured this remark,' answered Mr. D——, 'had you ever examined our Prayer Book. To know what Episcopalians believe, you must go to the standard writings which contain their belief. These writings are the Articles, the Homilies, and the Prayer Book. In all these you will find the necessity of this great moral change continually recognised, and constantly insisted upon. In numerous prayers the petition is put up to Almighty God, *that we, being regenerate and made his children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by his Holy Spirit*—that he would *grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit*—that he would *create and make in us new and contrite hearts*—and that he would *give us that peace which the world cannot give*. In all these writings, to which I have referred, you will find most clearly and explicitly stated the fact that mankind are by nature corrupt—that their hearts must be changed and purified by the Holy Ghost, and that the only hope of salvation for sinners is in the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ.'

" 'But,' replied my mother, 'I have often been told that

Baptismal regeneration.

your Church believed in baptismal regeneration, and considered no other change necessary except that which occurs in the administration of the sacrament of baptism.'

“ ‘The Episcopal church in reference to this matter is greatly misunderstood,’ said Mr. D——. ‘I myself could wish some other term were substituted in the place of *regenerate*, as used in the baptismal service, not because any erroneous doctrine is now taught—but because the true doctrine of the church is often misapprehended. No adult certainly ought to come to baptism till he is born of the Spirit; and being born in that ordinance of water, he may, according to the explanation of our Saviour, (John iii. 5,) be said to be regenerate, or born again. In relation to infants, this sacrament admits them into the church, and brings them into covenant with God, and *represents* the new birth. What spiritual influence is exerted upon them, we know not. They are born of water—and if they are offered in faith, and brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we believe it is one part of God’s covenant promise that they shall be born of the Spirit. We speak, therefore, in the language of faith, and thank God as though it were already done. But at the same time our ministers invariably address baptized persons in the language of Bishop Hall:—*If you find your hearts unclean—your hands idle and unprofitable—your ways crooked and unholy—your corruptions alive and lively, never pretend to any renewing. You are the old men still; and however ye may go for Christians, yet ye have denied the power of Christianity in your lives: and if ye so continue, the fire of hell shall have so much the more power over you, that it finds the baptismal water upon your faces.* We hold out no hope to any sinner without *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*’* ”

* If the reader desires to know the author’s views fully on this subject he would refer him to the 7th and 8th chapters of “A Walk about Zion,” 4th edition.

The practice of unregenerate persons reading the service.

“ ‘There is one practice,’ said my mother, still clinging to her early prejudices, and calling up all the strong reasons upon which they were founded; ‘there is one practice in your church which I highly disapprove, and to which I could never be reconciled. I refer to the practice of reading prayers. For in your Church, I see that all read, both religious and irreligious; and are we not told, that *the prayer of him that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, and the sacrifice of the wicked, is an abomination to the Lord?*’

“ ‘I might silence this objection,’ said Mr. D——, with great good feeling, ‘by asking you, if you do not also see, that in your church all *sing* who have voices, both religious and irreligious? And is prayer a more solemn act of worship than praise? If the prayer of the wicked be an abomination to the Lord, will not his praise be also?’

“ ‘But I think I can state to you good reasons why all who come to the house of God should be encouraged to unite in every act of prayer and praise. You certainly deem it right and proper that impenitent and unrenewed men should read the word of God. Now much the largest portion of our service which belongs to the people to read, is a part of that word—selections from the book of Psalms. If, then, it is proper for men to read the Scriptures at home, what impropriety can there be in their reading portions of them in the church? And is it not highly probable that when thus read in the presence of God, the solemn truths which concern our everlasting peace will be more likely to make a deep impression upon our minds than at any other time? And as to the prayers—the church supposes that every man who approaches the divine throne in their language, is sincere—that he means what he says. If he does not, the sin lies at his own door.’

“ ‘But do you not,’ said my mother, ‘suppose that many join in that service in a very thoughtless manner?’

“ ‘Very likely,’ said Mr. D——, ‘and this might be affirmed of those who approach God in any other mode of

The ground of attachment to the Episcopal church.

worship. But I think there are few modes of worship equally calculated to arrest the attention, and fix the wandering thoughts in deep solemnity on God. A man who was once very much devoted to a life of gayety, but is now an exemplary follower of Christ, told me, that he often used to come to church with his thoughts full of the world, but he never could proceed far in this service, without having such a view of divine things as to make the world and all its concerns appear as nothing and less than nothing. You see, therefore, the service not only excites devotion in the mind of the true worshipper, but leads even the thoughtless to remember the errand upon which they have come to the house of God.'

"Not to weary your patience," continued Miss Truman, as she proceeded in her narrative, "omitting other particulars, I will briefly state that this conversation, in connexion with the previous impressions made in witnessing the celebration of divine service, ultimately brought our whole family into the Episcopal church. My father became a truly converted man. He sometimes used pleasantly to refer to the time when we first met in the Episcopal congregation. He has since joined the church triumphant. O, how solemn was that moment when I kneeled by the side of his dying bed, and received his last parental blessing! Through life, as well as in his last moments, he gave the most satisfactory evidence that he belonged to the fold of that Almighty Shepherd who has said, *I know my sheep, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*

"My first attachment to the Episcopal church arose from the effect produced upon my mind by its sublime and holy worship. But when I came to study and understand the subject of the Christian ministry, and the constitution of the primitive church, I then discovered a new cause for attachment. I was delighted to find a perfect harmony subsisting between the church of my attachment and that

The hope desired in death.

founded by the Saviour himself. And I hope at last to be *gathered unto my fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience, in the communion of this catholic and apostolic church—in the confidence of a certain faith—in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope—in favour with God, and in perfect charity with the world.*"

The absorbing topic of conversation.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. JANEWAY.

"Behold'st thou yonder, on the crystal sea,
Beneath the throne of God, an image fair,
And in its hand a mirror large and bright?
'Tis Truth, immutable, eternal Truth,
In figure emblematical expressed.

* * * * *

The Bible holds this mirror's place on earth."

POLLOK.

HAD there been one of another communion present, to have listened to the animated and thrilling tones of this advocate of the Episcopal church, as she poured forth her glowing thoughts in the strain described in the last chapter, though he might perhaps have thought that she had too much sectarian feeling, and laid too much stress upon matters which are comparatively of minor importance, he still would have admired the warmth of her heart, the clearness of her views, and the manifest deep spirituality of her mind. These remarks of Miss Truman seemed to have imparted a brisk circulation to the ideas of all present; and the Episcopal church became the all-absorbing topic of conversation.

Among other things, it was noticed that one of the popular objections against this church was, that many of its members were mere formalists, destitute of all spirituality, zeal, and fervour; that the religion of Episcopalians was a religion rather of the head than of the heart; a religion that condemned feeling, and contented itself with the cold speculations of morality. One of the causes of this was supposed to be their mode of worship, inasmuch as they

True piety a steady and uniform principle.

confined themselves, in all the public services of the sanctuary, to a prescript form.

Mrs. Janeway, who seemed to have caught a degree of the inspiration that animated Miss Truman, replied, with some warmth, "I think that we may deny both the fact asserted, and the validity of the reason assigned. In the *first place*, it is not a fact, that the religion of Episcopalians is a religion with which the heart has no concern; and, *secondly*, it is not true that a prescript form of prayer tends to deaden spirituality, and dwarf true piety. If there be not found within our Zion that bewildering glare of fitful light which flashes like the lightning's lurid blaze across the sky of some, I trust we have among us a steady flame of piety, which, like the fire on the Jewish altar, burns on, from day to day, and year to year, and intermits not its light and warmth.

"I might state certain facts connected with the circumstances which first brought me within the pale of the Episcopal church, that would not only show that the objections urged are utterly groundless, but that true piety nowhere finds so safe and firm anchorage as in this blessed haven of the Redeemer.

"I feel attached to the Episcopal church," continued Mrs. Janeway, "because it possesses, in an eminent degree, the very excellencies in which these objections suppose it deficient. I love the church for her liturgy, which is calculated to promote seriousness and sobriety—rational, dignified, and consistent views of religion, and tends to inspire an enduring and abiding zeal. They first struck my eye as a prominent excellence in this ancient and venerable bulwark of Christian faith. The piety of her members did not appear to me like the sudden and startling blaze of the comet, but like the mild and steady beams of the fixed stars. The river of their peace seemed to flow on in an equable and unfluctuating current.

"My lot, in early life, was cast in the midst of a community where the Episcopal church was unknown. My immediate ancestors belonged to the Methodist connexion,

The walnut grove.

and I was educated in the views peculiar to that denomination of Christians.

“My first religious impressions, which were of any continuance, were produced at a quarterly meeting. This is a season of deep interest to the Methodist church, it being the time when the sacrament of the Lord’s supper is administered to the communicants of several congregations convened in one assembly. These assemblies are frequently so large, that no ordinary church edifice will contain them. Hence, when the weather is fine, and the place affords conveniences, the sermon is preached in the open air. This was the case at the time to which I allude.

“In the immediate vicinity of the village in which we resided, there stood a young and beautiful walnut grove. The land had once been cleared and cultivated, and these trees, though they had now attained considerable height, had grown up within the memory of several of the villagers. This grove was bounded on the north by a lofty range of hills, and on the south by the remains of the ancient forest. The road which led to the village passed along on the eastern side, and on the west this umbrageous retreat, by a gentle declivity, sloped down to the margin of a lake, whose blue waters spread out in beautiful expanse before the delighted eye. The surface of the earth through the whole extent of this grove was carpeted with the richest green.

“This was the spot selected for the quarterly meeting. Temporary benches, and a rude pulpit or stage, had been fitted up for the occasion.

“No one could have stood in the midst of this rural scene as it ordinarily existed, and contemplated the thick foliage that hung around him, the hum of a thousand insects, and the ripple of the ever-returning wave, that fell upon his ear, without subdued and serious feeling—without a tinge of that pleasing melancholy, or a glow of that enthusiasm, which the still and quiet scenes of nature usually inspire. But when this entire grove became crowded with

The quarterly meeting.

True eloquence.

The judgment.

one extended mass of thinking and listening beings, and the same breathless silence pervaded it, the effect would be heightened a thousand fold.

“Such was the scene exhibited, when Mr. C——, the presiding elder, stood upon the rude platform just alluded to, and addressed the listening thousands whom this quarterly meeting had convened. As the rich cadence of his clear, commanding, and deep-toned voice died upon our ear, the stillness of solitude pervaded the whole grove, and every eye seemed riveted upon the face of this venerable man of God. His was an almost unearthly eloquence. His eye seemed fixed upon eternal things, and he described them with the vividness of one actually looking into the invisible world.

“He had evidently caught new inspiration from the scene around him, and the lofty and impassioned strain in which he descanted upon the ways of God, exerted a singularly tranquillizing effect upon the whole audience. Not a groan or a sigh escaped from a single lip. Not even the rustling of a leaf was heard.

“His text was from the ninety-seventh Psalm :—*A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlighten the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*

“This passage he applied to the judgment, and drew a most affecting and terrific picture of the conflagration of the last day, when the morning sun would suddenly wane, and the heavens grow black, and the stars rush from their orbits, and the thunders of coming wrath would fall upon the startled ear, and the clang of the archangel’s trumpet, joined with the crash of the pillars of the earth, would wake the slumbering dead.

“But the colours in this picture were faint, compared with that which he drew of the anguish, sorrow, shame, and horror, that would seize the impenitent sinner in that fearful hour when rocks would not fall upon him, nor

Distress of mind.

mountains cover him from the dread presence of an avenging God.

“The truth had been spoken, and spoken most eloquently and faithfully. The Holy Spirit accompanied the word. Many were pricked to the heart, and myself among the number. It seemed as though the curtain had actually been lifted up, and the tremendous scenes of judgment made to pass before my eyes. A sort of strange and bewildering terror came over my brain. My guilt rose in awful and appalling colours before me; and it seemed as though the sentence, which was about to consign me to the fiery concave of endless wo, was then trembling on the lips of the Judge.

“I retired from this assembly under the deepest distress. Alarm and terror were the emotions that principally predominated in my mind. I had no peace. Wherever I went, the dismal portals of hell seemed opening to receive me. I tried to read my Bible. I tried to pray; but terror, dread terror, drank up my spirits, and pressed like a load of ice upon my heart.

“The state of my mind did not long remain unknown to my friends. They exhorted me to seek the Lord while he might be found, and to call upon him while he was near. They appointed numerous meetings on my account, and were very fervent in their prayers to God for my conversion. One of these meetings I shall never forget. It was held at the house of Mr. Janeway, the father of him who afterwards became my husband. This old gentleman was remarkably zealous in the cause of his Master, and on the present occasion he seemed transported far beyond the bounds of his ordinary fervour. The manner in which prayer meetings are usually conducted in private houses among the Methodist connexion, is as follows. All kneel down, and one commences with prayer. As soon as he ceases petitioning the Father of spirits, another instantly commences praying, while all still continue upon their knees. And thus the devotions proceed, until seve-

The prayer meeting.

ral individuals have addressed the throne of mercy. Then they all arise and sing; and the thrilling and animating character of their music is calculated to elevate the feelings to the highest pitch. As soon as the hymn is closed, all again prostrate themselves before the throne of God, and the devotions proceed as before. If there is a momentary pause between any of the prayers, some voice strikes up a hymn, which has for its subject encouragement to prayer, and usually by the time one verse is sung, the voice of supplication is again heard. There is something solemn and deeply affecting in these meetings, when conducted with sobriety and decorum.

“On the occasion, however, to which I have alluded, the feelings of several individuals had become exceedingly excited, and several voices were frequently heard commingled in devotion at the same time. At length there was a temporary pause. Not a groan or a sigh was heard. The silence of death pervaded the whole house. Mr. Janeway, the old gentleman of whom I spoke, came forward where I sat, and thus addressed me :—

“‘Charlotte, can you yet rejoice in the Lord?’

“You can well imagine from what I have already told you of my previous state of mind, that my feelings would naturally have been greatly excited by the exercises of this meeting. I felt that I had no lot nor part in what was passing around me. Indeed, I sat in the midst of this circle as a reprobate spirit would sit amid the hosannas of heaven. When, therefore, this question was so unexpectedly addressed to me, and every eye turned towards me, I could only say, with half-choked utterance, *‘My heart is a stranger to joy.’*

“‘Brethren and sisters,’ said Mr. Janeway, ‘let us make our special requests to God in behalf of this poor sinner.’

“Upon this, I was told to kneel down, and a number of persons kneeled around me, forming a circle. Each one

Excitement of the imagination.

of these in succession implored the divine mercy upon me, with strong cries and impassioned groans. The effect upon me was astonishing. As they described in their appeals to heaven, the mansions of glory, in all the glowing imagery with which their excited imaginations had invested those abodes of celestial peace, the upper world, with all its bright effulgence, seemed now opening upon me. To the often repeated question addressed to me, when prayer for a moment was intermitted—‘*Do you not now feel that your sins are pardoned?*’ I at length replied in the language of St. Stephen,—

“‘I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.’

“This called forth a burst of universal joy. Glory and praise to God were shouted from every lip.

“I thought I was converted, and was pronounced so by my friends, who had been so earnestly engaged in prayer for me. But, alas! the next morning all my rapture was gone. My sins still stared me in the face, and seemed to call for vengeance from above. I determined to spend as much of my time as I could in the house of God, in hopes of finding relief in thus waiting upon him.

“A custom prevails in the Methodist church, of gathering out from the congregation all who are seriously impressed, and bringing them forward around the altar, to be the subject of special prayer. After the ordinary services are closed, *the mourners*, as these persons are called, are invited to come forward, and kneel around the altar. Prayer is then offered up, by several individuals in succession, for them. This is all well and piously intended, and, in some instances, may be attended with happy results. It was not, however, in my case.

“Having once brought myself to this public declaration of my seriousness, I thought that I had performed a great act of duty—that I had taken up my cross, and commenced a religious life, and was almost prepared to exhort

Danger of pride.Spiritual declension.

others, when, in fact, I was blind and ignorant, and needed to be instructed *in the first principles of the oracles of God*.

“Ere I was aware of it, a sort of self-complacency—a feeling very nearly allied to pride—began to spring up within me every time I rose to go to the altar. I am fully of the opinion, that in all instances where a young female can so far overcome that native diffidence which causes her to shrink from the public gaze, as to come forward and take so conspicuous a station amid a crowded assembly, conscious that she is an object of universal interest, she is in great danger of jeopardizing that humble and lowly spirit which should ever characterize the followers of Jesus.

“My mind had become only partially enlightened. I relied too much upon a sort of animal excitement, or effervescence of feeling, which agitates but does not purify the heart. I did not have those deep and humbling views of the guilt and heinousness of sin, and the need of deliverance from its bondage, that the gospel inculcates. I rather looked at the consequences than the character of sin; and, therefore, was more anxious to escape the wrath of God, than to live to his glory. The work of grace, however, I believe, had commenced in my heart.

“I was received as a probationary member of the Methodist church. Before the stated period for probation expired, however, I had relapsed into all my former apathy and indifference in reference to the subject of religion, and, therefore, did not come forward to claim my privilege. In this state of spiritual death I continued for many years, till at length an event of the most afflicting character aroused me, through the mercy of God, to a perception of the sad state I was in.”

Just at this moment, as Mrs. Janeway paused in her narrative, it was observable to all the company, that the brother of Miss Truman seemed suddenly roused from the quiescent posture in which he had remained from the

Young Truman.

commencement of the conversation. A tinge of crimson streaked his pale and delicate features, as he inquired,

"Would it be esteemed rude or indecorous for one so young to express an opinion in reference to one or two remarks that have just been offered?"

"You have touched a tender point with my brother, who is half a Methodist," said Miss Truman, addressing herself to Mrs. Janeway.

"I should be sorry to inflict pain upon any one by my remarks," said Mrs. Janeway. "It is my earnest wish, Mr. Truman, that you should deliver yourself with perfect freedom in relation to any observation I may have made."

With some indications of timidity, but yet with a firmness of manner that increased as he proceeded, young Truman observed,

"I am not, as my sister has affirmed, *half a Methodist*; though were I one of that devoted and zealous people, I should not be ashamed of that honourable designation, but would bind it as a garland around my brow. But I claim to be a member of the Episcopal church, and I will yield precedence to none in my attachment to this church. I love the church for her spirituality and catholicism. It was the apprehension that Mrs. Janeway was departing in some measure from the kind and catholic spirit of her church, that prompted me to take this liberty to give utterance to my feelings. You seem to infer, Mrs. Janeway, that because in a single instance a few members of the Methodist church acted under undue excitement, as they did at the prayer meeting of which you speak, that, therefore, the whole Methodist connexion are deficient in Christian sobriety, and that their whole religion is made up of impulses and excitements. Now let me ask, is it candid, is it in consonance with that 'charity which is kind and thinketh no evil,' to draw a general sweeping conclusion against a whole denomination of Christians, from the indiscretion of a few individuals that chance to belong to it?

"Again; you seem to think that pride and many im-

Uncharitable judgment.

proper feelings will necessarily be awakened in the bosom of those who, while under serious impressions, go forward to the altar to ask an interest in the prayers of God's people. Now in this I must beg leave to differ from you. In your own case it operated unfavourably; but in thousands of instances, this practice adopted among our Methodist brethren has unquestionably been the means of confirming the undecided, and bringing out on the side of the Lord, those who would otherwise have remained undistinguished with the impenitent, till the voice of warning within them was stifled. What I object to is, giving a sweeping verdict against a denomination, by singling out one or two practices, or abuses, and fixing upon these as indicative of the character and spirit of the whole body. Now, I ask if we were judged in this way, how would it fare with us? Are there not sad instances of a low state of piety in our communion, and of worldliness both in the ministers and members of our church? Though now, generally speaking, among us, the gospel trumpet gives no uncertain sound; yet in times past have there not been many pulpits from which there emanated no clear and scriptural instruction in relation to the doctrines of grace, and the way in which a sinner can be justified before God? A few years since, would it have been difficult to have found congregations, worshipping in Episcopal churches, and going through all the forms of the Prayer Book, who were as utterly destitute of all spirituality as though God did not look at the heart, but observed only the outward appearance? Would it have been right to have condemned the whole Episcopal church on the ground of these single and isolated facts? Could these instances be urged as a valid and conclusive argument against the use of a liturgy? Would these instances have shown that the Episcopal church was unsound in the faith, or unevangelical in doctrine? In my view, by no means. And yet this mode of reasoning has been adopted by those who would build themselves up upon our ruins. Is it not true that this is what we have principally to complain

The zealous efforts of the Methodists.

of in other denominations? They have judged of the character of the Episcopal church from the conduct of those who, though within its pale, were not animated with its spirit, nor under the influence of its principles. Ought we not then to be very careful, and not do the same thing? God has certainly put the broad seal of his approbation on the zealous efforts of our Methodist brethren. They have done and are doing a work which is rescuing thousands from the pathway of perdition, and swelling the glorious retinue of Immanuel. The very custom which you reprobate, of going forward to the altar as subjects of special prayer, they think has been blessed to a great multitude which no man can number, many of whom are now in glory. Pardon this interruption, and do not regard these remarks as indicative of presuming forwardness in one who should rather *listen* than *speak*. I cannot bear to hear the Episcopal church vindicated in a way that will reflect censure upon other evangelical churches."

"I am delighted, my young friend," replied Mrs. Janeway, "with the spirit that you have evinced, and I would not intentionally say aught that might seem to be in discordance with that charity which 'suffereth long and is kind.' I think I might entirely vindicate the positions I have taken, and show that there is nothing in them contrary to this heaven-born spirit. But I waive this discussion. I have no warfare with the beloved people among whom my soul was first awakened to a perception of my guilt and danger. No—no, I love them: still I may be permitted to say that there are peculiarities in the Episcopal church, which lead me to prefer it before all others."

Mrs. Janeway was now requested to proceed in the narrative she had commenced. For a moment she paused, and then said:

"I observed that, it was by an afflicting dispensation of Providence that I was again awakened to a sense of my spiritual condition. Often, the earthly good that we set our hearts most upon is the very thing that God sees necessary

A mother's anxiety while over a sick child.

to pluck away from us in order to save our souls. The bubble must burst—the thorn must pierce our hands, before we can be induced to view things as they are. One has truly and beautifully said—

“The child who sees the dew of night,
Upon the spangled hedge of morn,
Attempts to catch the drops of light;
But wounds his finger with the thorn.
Thus, oft, the brightest joys we seek
Dissolve when touch'd, and turn to pain;
The flush they kindle leaves the cheek,
The tears they waken long remain.

“I had been happily married, and a merciful God had preserved my life to be the mother of a promising son. He had now attained a very interesting age, being three years old, and was quite a companion for his father and myself. Being unusually forward, he had learned to read, and seemed to comprehend things far beyond his age. He was full of sensibility and affection. During his sickness, when his father sat by his bed, he would often say, ‘Take my hand, papa,’—and when his father took his hand he would smile, as though his utmost wish was gratified. His sweet image is still before me; and long shall I remember his little sayings and remarks.

“He was at first but slightly indisposed, and for two or three weeks we apprehended no danger. But his disease at length became more visible, and put on a more obstinate and alarming character; so that, for the last three weeks of his life, it was plainly manifest that he was gradually sinking down to death. The thought of losing my child had never before seriously entered my mind; and that thought now became agony to me. I determined not to leave him for one moment, night nor day; and many silent hours did I sit and gaze upon his pale and emaciated features, as he patiently lay wasting away beneath the ravages of disease. The time at length came when

The backslidden without comfort in the hour of affliction.

the silver cord was to be loosened. O, I shall never forget the expression that his features put on, when the lustre began to fade from his eye, and the light from his animated countenance !

“ Soon the muscles in his face became fixed and motionless. His heart had ceased to throb. ‘ There my child lay breathless before me ! No one but a parent, who has had a darling child plucked away by death, can understand the deep and overwhelming sorrow which then weighed me down. I felt perfectly inconsolable. The world and its richest treasures then appeared to me as vain and valueless as children’s baubles.

“ I did not see the hand of God in this affliction, for my mind was completely occupied with what I had lost. I felt miserable, but did not know where to find relief. I felt the need of an almighty arm to lean upon, but, a stranger to Christian resignation, I still brooded over my sorrows, and looked not towards the hand that had inflicted the blow.

“ Mr. Janeway had in early life been under very deep religious exercises. He persuaded himself at that time that his mind had been transformed by the renewing grace of God, and he therefore had made a profession of religion. But alas ! his piety had too nearly resembled my own, and he had long since fallen into a backslidden state. He was therefore but ill prepared to pour the balm of consolation into my wounded bosom.”

Here Mrs. Janeway paused, as though agitated by deep internal feeling. The retrospect she had been taking had aroused a tide of emotion which she in vain sought to control. In spite of all her efforts, tears gushed from her eyes, and for a moment she could not proceed. The image of the departed rose before her, and her tears were a tribute to the memory of the dead.

“ Mr. Janeway,” at length she proceeded, “ was one of the best of men and kindest of husbands. And blessed be the name of the ever gracious and adorable Jehovah, my husband was not taken from me until he had given the

Mrs. Maison.

most satisfactory evidence that all was right between him and his Maker. I shall ever love the Methodists for his sake, and for the sake of my parents. I believe, as a people, they are doing great good in the world, and that there is among them much heavenly-mindedness and devotion to the Saviour. And among the happiest visions that will burst upon my view when the veil of mortality is lifted up, I have no doubt, will be the recognition of some whom I knew, and with whom I held sweet and holy converse, in the Methodist church.

“But this does not alter my sense of duty or of right. I left the church in which I was educated under the conscientious belief that I was attaching myself to a purer and more apostolic church. I conceive it to be a duty sacredly obligatory upon every individual, when convinced of error, to relinquish it, and embrace the truth, whatever sacrifices it may cost.

“The occurrence which first drew my attention towards the Episcopal church was the following:—

“I had been acquainted from childhood with a neighbour of ours, Mrs. Maison, who had uniformly been distinguished for correct and exemplary deportment. I had always loved this lady for the sweetness of her temper, and the gentleness of her manners.

“Mrs. Maison professed to be a pious woman, and there certainly was nothing in her external conduct at variance with this profession. I, however, when I first became impressed with serious things, used to think that the temperature of her piety was altogether too cold. It was then a season of great excitement. A sort of religious sympathetic glow seemed to pervade the whole community. Mrs. Maison did not *seem* to enter very warmly into this excited state of feeling, and I then drew the uncharitable conclusion that she was a cold formalist, and a stranger to heartfelt religion.

“Some two years after this, when all my effervescence of feeling had subsided, I one day called upon Mrs. Maison

The power of sympathy chastened and directed by true piety.

and found her in deep affliction. She had but a few months before buried her husband, and that morning she had received the melancholy intelligence of the death of a promising and only son. To my utter astonishment, she appeared tranquil and sustained. It is true, her heart was weighed down with sorrow—she had all the feelings of a bereaved mother; but her grief seemed chastened with the thought *that God had done it*; and with her it was a fundamental article of faith, *that God doeth all things well*. Her tranquillity at this moment was the result of an entire casting of all her care upon Jesus.

“When I learned her views, witnessed her meek submission, and saw the steadiness of her faith, I altered my opinion, and concluded that her piety, like gold tried in the fire, was unmixed with any earthly alloy, and would *be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ*. These impressions, however, soon passed away, and I ceased to regard Mrs. Maison in any other light than that of an amiable and interesting acquaintance.

“But, in that dark hour of sorrow and affliction to which I have referred, the voice of no friend seemed to soothe my heart like hers. She had suffered bereavement, and knew how to sympathize with the bereaved. Her unaffected and unostentatious piety now appeared to me invaluable. I saw that she was drawing streams of comfort from a fountain to which I was a stranger. I now began to think seriously upon my past ways, and to mourn over my aberrations from the path of duty. Mrs. Maison kindly sought to bind up my broken heart, and to point me to the only source of comfort. Sometimes, when she found me overwhelmed with sorrow, she would gently take my hand and say, ‘You are sick with grief; but there is *balm in Gilead, and a Physician there*.’

“One day, as Mrs. Maison dropped in, I said to her, ‘I am truly glad to see you; you always make me feel better, and resolve to do better.’

“ ‘I am happy,’ she replied, ‘if I can in any way contribute to your temporal or spiritual comfort.’

“ ‘I desire,’ said I, ‘to be a Christian, but I know not what course to take.’

“ ‘*In the day of adversity, consider,* is a scriptural precept,’ answered Mrs. Maison.

“ ‘I have been considering,’ replied I, ‘I have been considering God’s dealings with me, and I am greatly anxious to obtain his favour. I want those deep, abiding, soul-sustaining views of religion which you possess.’

“ ‘My dear friend,’ replied Mrs. Maison, ‘I fear you have too exalted an opinion of my attainments in the divine life. It is unquestionably true, however, that that religion which is not of a steady and uniform character is of little value.’

“ ‘This was the rock upon which my bark was wrecked,’ said I; ‘I once thought I was making the port of eternal life, but I was soon driven back by the winds of human passion to the point from whence I started. I want a religion that will stand by me through life, and will not forsake me at the hour of death. My feelings are easily excited: but, alas, former experience has convinced me, that this excitement will pass away like the *morning cloud and early dew*.’

“ ‘Perhaps,’ said Mrs. Maison, ‘one reason why your religious impressions were characterized with so little permanency, was, that you had formed erroneous opinions of the true nature of religion.’

“ ‘Very likely,’ replied I, ‘but I think my mind is now open to conviction.’

“ ‘I have known many people,’ continued Mrs. Maison, ‘who thought that if they could once attain unequivocal evidence that they were born again, they might, with propriety, dismiss all further solicitude about their salvation; while others, no less remote from the truth, were of opinion, that if they could work up their feelings to a certain pitch of fervour, this was a conclusive and satisfactory evidence that they enjoyed the favour of God. Now these views,

The nature of Christian faith.

from the very nature of things, must induce an unsubstantial and evanescent piety.

“ ‘It is important to begin at the beginning. There must be a work of grace in the heart, there must be a renovation in the inner man, before we can serve God aright. Our religion must be of that character which warms the feelings, and kindles the affections into a kindly glow. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that faith, the vital principle of Christian piety, is an active and operative principle. The Christian religion is not a set of abstract notions, but a system of practical truths, that can and should be brought to bear upon every action of our lives—to mould every temper of our minds, and regulate every disposition of our souls. The Christian’s labour is never finished till his earthly career is finished. The promise is, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* He must be unceasingly engaged in the work of his divine Master. And whatever he does, whether he eats or drinks, he must do all to the glory of God.’

“ ‘I thought much upon these remarks of my friend ; and the next time that I saw her I told her that I was now convinced that I had formerly mistaken the true nature of religion, but hoped, through her kind instruction, to proceed with more wisdom and prudence in search of *the pearl of great price.*

“ ‘I fear,’ said Mrs. Maison, ‘I should be but a poor guide to you ; for I may say that for many years I have been deprived of a spiritual guide. But my heart this morning is greatly rejoiced with some intelligence that I have received. I understand that the Rev. Mr. S——, one of the ministers of my own church, will officiate in this place next Sunday.’

“ ‘I have never known,’ said I, ‘among what denomination of Christians you classed yourself.’

“ ‘It is my exalted privilege to be a member, though a very unworthy one,’ said Mrs. Maison, ‘of the Episcopal church.’

The object of our visit to the sanctuary.

“ ‘Indeed !’ replied I ; ‘ I have always heard that church spoken of as a very cold, lukewarm body. But if you have drawn your views from the doctrines it inculcates, I wish to become acquainted with this church. Will you allow me to accompany you next Sunday ?’

“ ‘Certainly,’ said Mrs. Maison ; ‘ and if, after attending service in the Episcopal church two or three times, you are not satisfied with what you hear, I will not again ask you to go there for instruction.’

“ One has remarked,” continued Mrs. Janeway, “ that

“ Real faith is like the sun’s fair flower,
Which, midst the clouds that shroud it, and the winds
That wave it to and fro, and all the changes
Of air, and earth, and sky, doth rear its head,
And looketh up still steadfast to its God.

“ I could not but think of these words when Mrs. Maison left me. She, most obviously, had *real faith*. Amid all the changes that had come over her, she had continued to look steadfastly up to God.

“ Agreeably to our appointment, the next Sunday I met Mrs. Maison, and accompanied her to the place where the Episcopal missionary was expected to preach. Long before he commenced his sermon, my feelings were interested in a way and to a degree which I cannot describe. The service was new to me, but it struck me as heavenly and sublime. There was a simplicity, and fervour, and animation, and decorum about it, which I had never before observed in any mode of worship. As this spiritual offering of devout hearts ascended on high, I could not but say to myself, again and again, *This is worship ! this is worship !* And the thought now struck me, in a way in which it never had before, that the great business for which we visit the sanctuary of the Most High is, *to worship*.

“ When the minister proceeded to his sermon, he announced this passage as his text : *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God ?*

Spiritual worship.

Growth in grace.

Mic. vi. 6. This he applied to public worship, showing what public worship should be ; and then proceeded to consider whether the liturgy of the Episcopal church was a fit service wherewith to come before the Lord.

“He showed, most conclusively, that, if offered in sincerity, it was a spiritual offering ; and, from its whole structure and arrangement, admirably calculated to keep up attention, and excite the highest devotional feelings.

“ ‘It is impossible,’ said he, ‘for the worldly man to join in this service, understandingly, and not resolve to amend his ways. It is impossible for the Christian, however indisposed his mind may be to heavenly converse in the commencement—it is impossible for him to go through this solemn service, without feeling, kindling within him, a glow of almost seraphic devotion. The liturgy is calculated to awaken and keep alive a pure and steady flame of Christian zeal. It checks, by its sober and rational offices, the ebullitions of enthusiasm ; and awakens and fans, by the deep spirituality that pervades those offices, the flame of pure devotion. The doctrinal views it exhibits, and the manner in which it exhibits them, admirably harmonize with the spirit of genuine Christianity.

“ ‘The great error of the present day is the opinion, that when the heart has been once brought to feel the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, the business of religion is at an end. In direct opposition to this opinion, *the Prayer Book* instructs those who approach the divine throne, to entreat the Father of mercies *to pour* upon his ministers, and *the congregations committed to their charge, the continual dew of his blessing—that they may daily be renewed by his Holy Spirit—daily increase* in righteousness and true holiness *more and more, until they come unto his everlasting kingdom.* Growth in grace, and continual increase in the divine life, are ideas to which great prominence is given, and great importance attached, in the Prayer Book.

“ ‘Then, too, this formula of worship, by the arrangement of its service, brings before us in succession all the

great events and doctrines connected with the work of our redemption. Each Sunday it has some new and interesting truth for our consideration; and, by thus continually calling our attention to the different and separate parts of this great and glorious system of grace, the mind is kept active, the interest is not suffered to decline, nor the warmth of piety to languish. And I do really believe, that such a systematic arrangement of subjects as the Prayer Book presents, not only tends to edification, but is eminently calculated to kindle and keep alive true Christian zeal in the heart.'

"This sermon imparted to me much valuable information, and I was more than ever convinced that I had hitherto been ignorant of the true nature of religion. The Episcopal missionary preached in our village three Sundays in succession. I was a constant attendant; and the more I saw and heard, the more I admired this mode of worship.

"It so happened that I did not meet Mrs. Maison, except at church, until after the third Sunday on which we had had Episcopal service.

"The next time she called upon me, an almost unearthly radiance lit up her countenance, as she affectionately embraced me, and said,—

" 'Rejoice with me, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my supplication. Long have I made it the subject of earnest prayer to God, that he would plant in this region a branch of his pure apostolic church, and grant to me the unspeakable privilege of again mingling my voice with his people, in the language of that liturgy which I was taught to lisp in infancy to the praise of his glorious name.

" 'And now, my dear friend,' continued Mrs. Maison, 'arrangements are making, as I understand, to have stated Episcopal service in this place. Will you not rejoice with me?'

" 'Yes,' I replied, 'and constantly go with you to that service.'

" 'But how can you leave your own church?' said Mrs. Maison. 'Will it not grieve your friends to see you

Correspondence between the lessons of Scripture and the devotional services.

attending the services of a church, against which they cherish such strong prejudices ?

“ ‘In this matter,’ said I, ‘I must act for myself, and follow what appears to me to be the path of duty. And on this subject my mind is entirely made up.’

“ ‘I am glad you have come to this conclusion without any help from me,’ said Mrs. Maison. ‘Although no one can be more pleased with the result than I am, still I did not wish to warp your judgment. And now I suppose I may ask, how you were pleased with our mode of worship ?’

“ ‘So well pleased,’ answered I, ‘that I am become a thorough convert to the argument of your preacher. The service appears to me so sublime and spiritual that I feel confident it will never wear out ; and I shall never become weary of it.’

“ ‘There is certainly much to keep up the interest, in our form of worship,’ said Mrs. Maison. ‘The different parts assigned to the minister and people, in the performance of this service, produce the most happy and animating influence upon all. And did you observe what a delightful correspondence there was between the Scriptures that were read, and the services that followed ?’

“ ‘I do not know,’ said I, ‘that I understand the precise points to which you refer.’

“ ‘You know,’ she continued, ‘that the lesson, on the first Sunday on which we had service, being the 20th Sunday after Trinity, was the 17th chapter of 1 Kings, which relates the interesting story of Elijah’s sojourn with the widow of Zarephath—records the fact, that *the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail*, upon which they all subsisted, and describes, with a simplicity and pathos unequalled, the grief of the bereaved mother upon the death of her child, and the manner in which he was restored to life. This display of Almighty power having been recited in the hearing of the congregation, they rise up in one great company. and thus address the

The excellencies of the liturgy.

Eternal, *We praise thee, O God ; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.* Equally applicable is this address to Jehovah, as it followed the lessons, last Sunday and the Sunday before, being the 21st and 22d Sundays after Trinity. The one records a display of divine power as manifested in healing the Syrian leper : the other, in protecting Daniel in the lions' den.

“ ‘ So at the close of the second lesson, taken from the New Testament, which related our Saviour's interview with Nicodemus, and glanced at the grand object of his mission to our earth, to redeem and regenerate our fallen race ; nothing could follow more fit or appropriate, than the hymn in which the whole congregation unite,

“ ‘ *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people ;*

“ ‘ *And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of his servant David.*’

“ Thus Mrs. Maison from time to time called my attention to the striking excellencies of the liturgy, and it was not long before I acquired such a relish for it that I could be satisfied with no other mode of worship. I became a member of the Episcopal church. Of this act I have never had cause to repent. I have been called to pass through many trials, but the Lord hath never left nor forsaken me. Often has the animating spirit that pervades the Prayer Book, rekindled the expiring flame of devotion, and awakened within me new purposes to live to the glory of God.”

Sympathetic influence.

CHAPTER V.

MR. COLCHESTER.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.”

From the Book of Ecclesiastes.

MANKIND are sympathetic beings. This peculiarity in the human constitution accounts for numerous moral phenomena, which would otherwise be inexplicable. It accounts for that strong tendency, which seems interwoven with our very nature, to become assimilated and identified with whatever is immediately around us. We are constantly acted upon by the moral and intelligent beings with whom we are brought into contact. Almost unconsciously are we led by the sympathetic and social principle that connects us with other beings, to laugh with those who laugh and weep with those who weep. We see this sympathetic principle operating in a great variety of ways. We cannot but have observed how often in the social circle, where one has begun to relate an anecdote, there has been awakened a perfect passion for repeating incidents of a similar character. In like manner the reader will undoubtedly recollect repeated instances, where, after an individual had, in the midst of a little group, been led to give some account of his own personal history, the whole company present have been singularly prompted to turn autobiographers. I recollect a striking instance of this in a stage-coach. The inclemency of the weather and the state of the roads rendered every thing dull and gloomy around us. There were some eight or nine passengers in

Narrative-relating mood.

the coach, most of whom were entire strangers to each other. The travelling was excessively bad—the day dark and stormy; and for a while, as we were slowly rolled on, splashing through the water and mud, each one seemed wrapped in his own thoughts and private meditations. At length, however, occasional remarks were offered by one and another, till at length some observation, the nature of which I do not now recollect, led one of the passengers, who was a very plain sort of man, to entertain us with a sketch of his own personal history. When he had brought his narrative to a close, to my utter astonishment, another person who sat near him began to introduce us into the arcana of his private life—detailing very minutely the circumstances connected with his early years, his adventures at school, and his courtship and marriage. He was followed by a third; and this mania continued to extend and prevail, till each one of the company, with the single exception of the author, had narrated their own private history, from beginning to end.

So on the occasion to which the reader's attention has been directed in the preceding chapter, the narratives that had been given, seemed to throw all the company into a narrative-relating mood. At the conclusion of Mrs. Jane-way's sketch of her religious history, several facts were mentioned, showing the misapprehension that was entertained in relation to the liturgy of the Episcopal church. Some had supposed it a cold formal service, better suited to the taste and feelings of men who had never been truly converted, but who wished to keep up the external decencies of religion, than to the regenerate and spiritually minded Christian. Mr. Colchester, who had at first laboured so much to promote sociability among us, seemed now to feel prompted to meet these objections with some warmth: he remarked,—

“Did I not fear that any statement I could make would be tedious and tiresome after the interesting narratives to which we have listened, I should feel tempted to relate the

manner in which my mind was first opened to a perception of the excellence and spiritual character of the liturgy, in order to show the absurdity and groundlessness of these objections."

Mr. Colchester was immediately assured that his apprehensions on that score were quite unnecessary, and the request became general and very urgent, that he should add the account, to which he alluded, to the entertainment and instruction of the evening. This importunity prevailed; and Mr. Colchester, therefore, favoured us with the following statement. There were several things in the account which he related, that struck us all as singular, and a number of the incidents were certainly such as do not ordinarily occur in real life. The statement is set down, as far as it can be recalled, in the words of the narrator. Whether the sketch which Mr. Colchester drew of the reformed profligate was a creation of his fancy, or an actual occurrence in real life, it illustrates several important principles, and brings strikingly to view the spirituality and moral power of the liturgy.

Mr. Colchester began by remarking,—

"I fear some of the incidents I have to relate will appear at first foreign and far-fetched, but they will be found in the end to be intimately connected with the causes which led to my first knowledge of the Episcopal church, and my attachment to the liturgy.

"It was my misfortune to be born of parents who made this world their idol. They had no attachment to any particular religious denomination. They paid no attention to my religious education, excepting occasionally to take me with them to a Baptist church, the only one in the neighbourhood, where I was neither interested nor instructed by the long, dull, prosing sermons I heard. Thus, like thousands of others, I grew up in almost total ignorance of God, and my own duty as a moral and religious being.

"But although my parents were so neglectful of my

The violent shower.A country inn.

religious culture, they evinced the utmost concern and solicitude in training me to habits that would ensure my prosperity and success in business. Hence I entered upon life with all the knowledge and experience which a young man of twenty-two could acquire from the best qualified instructors, and an extensive intercourse with society.

“My business occasionally rendered it necessary for me to travel quite into the interior; and, from the belief that it was more conducive to health, I usually made these jaunts on horseback. It was on one of these tours, that travelling in a northern direction, and following the course of the Hudson, I was suddenly overtaken by a violent shower. Fortunately an inn was within sight, towards which I rode with great speed. I arrived just in time to avoid being drenched with the torrents descending from the clouds. The whole heavens soon became overcast, and there appeared every indication of a dull, rainy day. Finding myself thus weather-bound, I looked around in search of some mode of entertaining myself, to beguile the tediousness of the livelong day. A family Bible, and one or two marvellous narratives of shipwrecks and captivity, constituted the entire library of my host. Indeed, my quarters were not the most enviable. A bed-room, kitchen, and bar-room were the only rooms on the first floor. The fare was substantial, but scarcely as savory or palatable as that found in the most indifferent country farmhouse. The kitchen was used both for a cooking and dining-room: and the other large apartment answered the twofold purpose of a bar-room and parlour. Having but small resources within myself, the day passed heavily away. At length, just before the setting of the sun, the clouds rolled back in large and broken masses, and exhibited the glorious luminary of day sinking behind the western hills in bright and unobscured effulgence. It was, however, too late now to think of advancing on my journey. I had concluded to wait patiently till the morrow, and was revolving in my mind how I should wear out the

An incident.A prize.

time through the evening, when the cry suddenly struck upon my ear, '*A plank—a plank—to the boat—to the boat!*'

"The inn, which I have before described, stood upon an eminence, and so near the noble waters of the Hudson as to overlook its course for some miles. The country where this river takes its rise is rough and mountainous, and valuable chiefly on account of its lumber. Vast quantities of boards and timber are annually floated down this river upon rafts. Numerous saw-mills are built upon its tributary streams; and nothing is more frequent than to see fragments of boards or planks drifting upon the surface of the majestic stream. A custom prevailed among those who resided on the banks of this river, in the neighbourhood where I was then detained, of seizing and bringing to shore, for their own use, all the floating boards and spars of timber that they happened to espy. In this way they often collected in the course of the season much valuable lumber.

"The cry that arrested my attention had been raised in consequence of the discovery of a plank slowly floating down the river. The little boat, fastened by means of a chain to a stake driven into the ground, was soon loosened, and navigated by the skilful hands of a lad about fourteen years old. It shot like an arrow from the shore, and soon returned freighted with the plank. No sooner had the young mariner reached the bank, than he shouted out in a triumphant tone, '*Here is a prize!—a box is fastened to the plank.*'

"I stood looking with a number of other individuals to witness the skill of this young sailor, and upon hearing this information hastened along with them to the spot. The plank was immediately drawn up on the bank, and the cause of this outcry became manifest. A box was discovered fastened to the plank, which was soon liberated from it. This box, which was small and very tight, was at first supposed to be the depository of something highly

The manuscript.

valuable, and therefore in searching for a way of access to the interior, great caution was taken to do no violence to the treasure within. By means of a chisel the cover was at length removed; when, lo! instead of gems or gold, nothing was discovered but a manuscript, neatly folded together, written in a close, fine hand.

“After various speculations the wondering group came to the conclusion, that it was best to have the manuscript read, as it might reveal the spot where treasures were hid in the earth, or some other important secret. I was, therefore, requested to act in the present instance as their clerk. The company drawn together by this marvellous occurrence, having returned to the bar-room, were now in the attitude of profound attention; when I read in substance as follows.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE MANUSCRIPT.

“ But rooted stood in manhood’s hour,
The weeds of vice without their flower,
And yet the soil in which they grew,
Had it been tamed when life was new,
Had depth and vigour to bring forth
The hardier fruits of virtuous worth.”

SCOTT.

THE substance of the manuscript which Mr. Colchester related that he read on the occasion, referred to at the close of the last chapter, was as follows :

“ In the fear of God, and with the full conviction that I am shortly to appear in his dread presence to answer for this and all the other acts of my life, I draw up the following brief biographical sketch of myself.

“ The course that I have marked out requires me to sit in judgment upon my own heart, and to make the same full and unreserved disclosure of my conduct and character, as I expect the judgment will make to an assembled world.

“ I begin with my childhood—the period in which was laid the foundation of all my subsequent misfortunes and sins. My parents, when they were first married, were in moderate circumstances, and ranked with the middling class of people. But having by their industry and the blessing of Providence accumulated a considerable estate, they were living, when I entered upon the stage of being, in ease and affluence. They were now extremely anxious to associate with people of the first rank, and resorted to numerous ridiculous expedients to accomplish the object of their

Early habits of deceiving, how induced.

wishes. They were exceedingly desirous that their children should appear smart: and as I was an only son, every opportunity was seized to make me show off, and pass in point of excellence for something more than I really was. I frequently heard my parents, in the presence of company, giving me credit for qualities and attainments which, I knew I did not possess, but the semblance of which, as they claimed them for me, I thought it necessary for me to put on. Thus in early life, while yet a child, I learned to deceive—learned to pass myself off for what I was not. This has been the source of all my subsequent difficulties.

“I presume my parents were not conscious that they were deviating from the line of rectitude in the course they pursued. Their vanity led them to believe, that I possessed every accomplishment. Having learned from them the lesson of artifice, as I grew up I began to practise it upon them.

“There were too many allurements in the midst of a dissipated city, not to insnare one so imperfectly fortified against the insidious assaults of vice as myself. My parents were so solicitous about my worldly reputation, that they would have shuddered at the thought of my indulging in habits of profligacy. Still my inclinations led me to this course, and I had never known what it was to restrain the wayward tendencies of my corrupt nature. Here, therefore, I found it necessary to use deception. I wanted money, but did not wish to have my father know the purpose to which I was going to apply it. I therefore professed to have a great taste for literature: and when I wished to make a new draft upon him for money, I could always invent the names of numerous new and valuable authors whose works I was desirous of purchasing; and he was always proud in gratifying me in this passion for reading. The money thus obtained for the purchase of books I laid out in my own way. In this manner I was continually furnished with the means of indulging in all the fashionable vices of a dissipated town.

Deceit practised in social intercourse.

“Upon the death of my parents I came into the possession of a handsome estate, with, as I supposed, a consummate knowledge of men and manners.

“I had a few general maxims, which I vainly imagined would guide me unerringly through the mist and mazes of life; and I often used to look down, from the imaginary height upon which I stood, with supercilious contempt upon the vulgar crowd who were pursuing the beaten track of sincerity and truth. Among the maxims to which I just alluded were the following. *All men like to be pleased. Flattery will please all men: for all men are vain and susceptible of being flattered. The common courtesies of life do not admit of a strict adherence to truth.*

“In my intercourse with others these were my governing principles of action. By some little quickness of perception and versatility of character I succeeded in rendering myself an agreeable companion in most circles, and thus gained free access to the drawing-rooms of the most elegant and polished society. Flattery was the key with which I undertook to unlock every heart. And so accustomed did I become to doing things for effect, that I could not go about the most ordinary business without having an under-plot. I carried this system of deception into all the transactions of life. I sought the heart and hand of her that was to be my wife, by deception.

“Ellen B—— was a sweet and lovely girl. She knew nothing of the wiles of the world. I loved her for that very simplicity and artlessness that I was a stranger to. I knew that, if she understood my real character, she could not love me. I had resolved that she should be mine. Knowing that she had the highest regard for religion, and was herself a pattern of unostentatious piety, I pretended that a great revolution had been wrought in my views and feelings. I learned to repress the profane oath, and put on the various semblances of piety. When we walked in the moonlight, and underneath the starry vault, I would take occasion to descant upon the beauties of creation and the

Hypocritical profession of religion. Dissolute habits. Conjugal unkindness.

benevolence of the Creator. Thus I won my way to her unsuspecting heart. She became my wife. To keep up the deception, and impress her with the idea that I was truly religious, I even went to the sacramental table.

“But in the retirement of the domestic life, amid the cares and perplexities incident to the happiest connexion, the mask could not always be worn. Often would poor Ellen start, and shudder with horror at discoveries she made. But in my better moods I attempted to soothe her into forgetfulness of what she had discovered.

“She had now become the mother of two interesting children. The soul of sensibility, she was all tenderness and affection to her husband. But ah, how ill requited was all her love and kindness ! So dissolute had my habits now become, that she could not but awake to the painful perception of my real character. The shock was too great for her feeble frame, and in a few months she sunk like a blighted flower into the grave.

“Time passed on, but only confirmed me in those principles of action which I had embraced in early life. I sought to repair my shattered fortune by another matrimonial connexion. I found means to inspire a young lady of fortune and high intellectual culture with the profoundest veneration for my character. Such proficiency had I made in the arts of deceit, and so skilfully did I wear the mask of hypocrisy, that years passed away before this lady, now my wife, had any correct views of my character. But the truth at length came out, and she saw that her fortune was entirely frittered away. Though I continued to talk of my estates, and of the new investments I intended to make, my affairs were utterly ruined. This now became abundantly apparent to my wife. Utterly at a loss how to turn, or meet my engagements, I began to vent my ill nature in curses and abuses upon the companion of my bosom. At times I would seek forgetfulness of my troubles in beastly drunkenness. A total recklessness of principle came over me. All the moral sensibility that I had ever possessed

The desperate resolve.

now became prostrated by long-continued habits of falsehood and profligacy. Every spark of conjugal and parental affection seemed extinguished. All, all was gone, save my ruling passion—*vanity*. I still wished to be esteemed. I still continued to hold up my head in the world. I made a thousand shifts—contracted debts I never meant to pay, and made engagements that I never expected to keep. I promised, and reiterated my promises, till promising would answer no longer. Matters had now arrived at a crisis with me. I saw I must fall.

“In a fit of desperation I determined to abandon my family, and seek a home among strangers. I told my wife it was necessary for me to leave town a few days. Whether she had any apprehensions of what was passing within my mind, I know not: but she immediately requested that she might accompany me. This request threatened to frustrate my whole project. But then a new thought struck me, and I immediately consented to her proposition. I determined to go up the North river, and as soon as we arrived at our place of destination, I immediately took lodgings at a public inn. Having done this, I did not stay to sit down, but told my wife it was necessary for me to hasten back to the steamboat to get my valise which I had left there. On my way to the steamboat I took passage in one of the northern stages, which was that moment starting, and hardly left the vehicle until I arrived in the neighbourhood of Fort Ann. I entered no dwelling at that place, but taking my valise under my arm, struck across the fields, not knowing nor caring where I went. Night-fall found me wandering amid the barren and mountainous tract of country in which one branch of the Hudson takes its source. Here at last I sat down upon a log, almost stupefied with despair. It was the last of the vernal months. The weather was mild—the scene wild and picturesque, and under other circumstances I might have passed the night delightfully under the excitement of buoyant and romantic feeling. But the soft dreams of romance had now

The profligate's dark communing with himself.

for ever passed away with me. I had run the giddy rounds of pleasure and of sin, and with the wise man I felt, with a bitterness that can be equalled by nothing but the torments of hell, that *all was vanity*.

“ ‘What’—said I, as I sat upon a log in a secluded glen amid the wild mountains of Lucerne, just as the brown of evening came over—far from human habitation—no sounds interrupting the profound solitude of the place, save now and then the hoarse note of the crow from the top of the neighbouring hemlocks—or the rustle of a leaf, as with extended and sable wing he swept over my head.

“ ‘What is there, in this hollow-hearted world, worth living for? Have I not drunk from the cup of pleasure? Have I not trod the paths of honour? And what am I now but a houseless—friendless outcast! Yes! I am a bankrupt—my family are reduced to beggary! Yes, yes, it is even so!—and should I attempt to continue to walk on in the paths of the living world, I should be trodden under foot. I had rather die than be despised. O yes! the thought of death is sweet.’

“ The sudden crackling of a decayed limb of a tree, as though trampled beneath a human foot, startled me from this dreadful reverie. I arose and looked around, to see if I could discover any human form amid the gathering mists of night. The words of the poet were then singularly applicable to my situation.

“ How those fallen leaves do rustle on the path
With whispering noise, as if the earth around me
Did utter secret things!
The distant river too, bears to mine ear
A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!
Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.”

“ Having satisfied myself that I was alone, and that no human ear could drink in the sounds I uttered, I again sat down to renew this dark communing with myself. O! I shudder at the recollection of the dreadful purposes that were then awakened within me. The thought of self-

The suicide arrested in his purpose.

destruction had been embraced, and every view I took of the future and the past seemed to confirm me in this determination.

“ ‘Yes,’ said I, ‘it shall be done.’ ”

“At this moment the idea suddenly darted across my mind, Are you prepared to meet God upon his judgment-seat ?

“This idea awoke me as from a guilty dream. I had never had leisure or disposition to bestow any serious thought upon the subject of religion, but viewed it as I did many other things, valuable merely as contributing to the advancement of some worldly plan I was desirous of accomplishing. But now the thought fastened upon my mind—*what if the Bible should be true?*

“ ‘Then,’ I exclaimed aloud, and with almost maniac rage, ‘then I shall surely go down to hell !’ ”

“ ‘Will it be well,’ a voice seemed to whisper in my ear, ‘will it be well, then, to make the dreadful plunge with all thy guilt upon thee ?’ ”

“ ‘*What guilt?*’ I exclaimed, springing up in a sort of frantic insanity, ‘*what guilt?*’ ”

“Conscience, whose voice was now heard in spite of all my efforts, did not long demur to tell me *what guilt* covered my soul. The iniquities of my past life rose to my view in the most appalling colours. The gentle form of Ellen B——, whom my unkindness had brought to an early grave, seemed now to glide before me among the trees, and a passage of poetry which I had frequently heard her repeat, rushed into my mind :—

“This sacred shade and solitude, what is it ?

’Tis the felt presence of the Deity.

Few are the faults we flatter, when alone.

Vice sinks in her allurements—is ungilt—

And looks like other objects, *black* by night :

By night an atheist half believes a God.

“A death-like terror crept over my limbs, and my whole frame shook with trembling. I flung myself upon the

ground, and groaned for very agony. I can give no idea of the horrors of that awful night. It seemed an actual foretaste of hell. I was made, in a manner in which no language can describe, *to possess the iniquities of my youth.*

“When the morning dawned, I covered my eyes with my hands ; for I could not bear to look upon the light. All within me was dark and dismal. All that day and the next night I spent in mental anguish little short of distraction. I neither ate, nor drank, nor slept, but thought and thought until my heart was ready to burst. On the second morning I lifted myself from the earth, and again took my seat upon the same log where I at first sat down. My valise met my eye. Without any definite purpose I began to undo it, and took out one article of clothing after another, till at length I came to a small volume, which had evidently been put up with much care. I took it up, and opened it. It was a *Prayer Book*. The thought instantly rose in my mind, How came this book among my things ?

“ ‘Probably,’ said I to myself, ‘the hand of her that I have so unpardonably abused, kindly placed it here for my benefit.’

“My wife was a member of the Episcopal church, and would often ask me to take a Prayer Book along when I was starting upon a journey. I, however, never listened to her, as I wished to have as little to do with religion and religious things in my retirement as possible. I knew scarcely any thing in relation to this book. I was a nominal member of a church that did not use a prescript form of prayer. The one or other mode of worship was a matter of great indifference to me. In truth, prayer of every kind appeared ridiculous to me : for in my heart I thought all religion either delusion or hypocrisy.

“But during the last thirty-six hours my soul had been pressed down with a weight of anguish and remorse, which nothing short of the power of an infinite God could have

The confession.

The absolution:

laid upon me. I could no longer doubt his existence, or his abhorrence of sin.

“As I carelessly opened this volume, therefore, the first page and passage that struck my eye, was the General Confession:—

“*‘Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done: and there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.’*”

“These words, as I read on, seemed to describe my case so exactly, that I could not but adopt, as my own, the sentiments they expressed, and mentally offer up the petitions as I proceeded. It was the first time I ever truly looked up to God in prayer; and the act of thus looking to him, seemed to lighten in some little degree the burden of my sorrow.

“My eyes now became riveted upon the prayer, and I said to myself, ‘The person who indited this must have felt as I feel. How exactly these expressions designate me! I am truly a wandering and strayed sheep. I have ever followed the devices and desires of my own heart. I have awfully offended against God’s holy laws. I have ever left my duty undone, and my whole life has been filled up with acts contrary to the will and word of God, and I may well exclaim—*There is no health in me!* And I fear I shall die eternally.’

“Having read through this prayer, I came to what is styled, ‘*The Declaration of Absolution, or Remission of Sins.*’ This at first startled me. I had heard in early life, that the ministers of the Episcopal church claimed a sort of divine right, derived from the apostles, to pronounce forgiveness of sins to men. This, thought I, is absurd; for who can know the heart or forgive sins but God. I,

The rude cabin.Solitary life.

however, determined to read and see what this declaration of absolution was. Upon a perusal, I found it nothing more than a condensed view of the gospel—a simple statement of the terms upon which God will pardon, and receive the sinner again into favour. This was the very information I needed. And although it did not bring peace to my soul, it took away some of the bitterness of despair, to hear,—that ‘*God pardoneth and absolveth all those who truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel; that he hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who, with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto him.*’

“‘I now became sensible that my exhausted frame could not long survive without sustenance. Having repacked my things, I began to look around to see if could find any means of procuring some food. I walked some miles, and was ready to sit down in despair, when I heard the distant sound of an axe. Following this sound, I at length found some dozen men felling timber. Their little cabin furnished me with something to appease my hunger, and afforded me lodgings for the night. The next morning I retraced my steps to the spot where the Almighty first revealed himself to me. There seemed something very dear and sacred to me in that spot. The thought occurred to me, of erecting a cabin, and spending the remainder of my days upon this spot. I immediately began to put this plan into execution. I explored the surrounding wilderness—ascertained the nearest settlements—and made such purchases of food, grain, farming and cooking utensils as I needed. My wants were few,—and the little money I took with me, which would have been spent in the dissipation of one night, has, joined with industry, supported me with all the necessaries of life, and is still unexhausted. In the neighbourhood where I reared my cabin were several vacant patches of earth, unoccupied by trees, which I have cultivated from year to year, and which have yielded me an ample supply of food. Although the nearest settlement is not more than

The solace derived from the communion service.

six miles from me, so secluded and unknown is my retreat, that for ten years, the whole period I have spent in this spot, I have never had a single visiter.

“It was for many long weeks after I began to build my rude cabin before I found any comfort in religion. During this period, as I had no Bible, I perused the little volume I have spoken of frequently and attentively, and derived great satisfaction and benefit from it. It contains a choice collection of precious Scripture, and its prayers are truly evangelical.

“One afternoon, as I sat in my cabin meditating upon my past life, and thinking over all my numerous sins, I opened this Prayer Book. My eye fell upon the Confession in the Communion Service. It seemed exactly descriptive of my state and feelings. I felt that my sins and wickedness were indeed manifold—that I had most grievously insulted the Divine Majesty by thought, word, and deed. The remembrance of my sins pressed down my soul like an intolerable burden, and all that I could do, as the tears rolled down my cheeks, was to cry—*‘Have mercy upon me—have mercy upon me, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, forgive me all that is past.’* There was comfort in thus pouring out my soul to God. But still greater comfort was soon to descend into my pierced and wounded heart. I read on as follows:—*‘Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all who truly turn unto him.*

“ ‘Come unto me, all ye that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

“ ‘So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

“ ‘Hear also what St. Paul saith.

“ ‘This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’

“These words, as though they had come that moment

from the mouth of God himself, in a way that I cannot explain dissipated my sorrow, and filled my soul with peace and joy. O how did my heart then burn with desire to praise and magnify that glorious grace, which could cancel the whole sum of my guilt ! The book was still in my hand, and as my eye passed along I saw this appropriate exhortation,

“ ‘Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.’

“ And with a full soul I joined in the response,

“ ‘*It is meet and right so to do : It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God : Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name ; evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory : Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.*’ ”

“ I relate these circumstances with this minuteness, because I trace in this whole transaction the hand of God. His Spirit must have put it into the heart of my wife to have packed up this book with my things. And this book, by the blessing of God, was the chief instrument by which I was plucked from the pit of damnation and despair. This formula of worship, unless I greatly err, has been much misapprehended and misunderstood in the living world. There is a spirituality in it which cannot be discovered, or felt, till the soul is taken off from sensible objects and fixed in intense abstraction upon God. During my long solitary residence in this spot, I have never found any way of approaching the throne of Omnipotence, that satisfied me so well as in its simple forms of devotion. In the litany especially there is a pathos and depth of feeling almost beyond the reach of uninspired composition. And I often feel while repeating the *Gloria in Excelsis* amid this solitude, that I am standing in the porch of heaven,

Ascertainment of the will of divine Providence.

and have caught the echo of that angelic worship that goeth up around the throne.

“I have spent ten years in this lonely glen, having for my chief employment the service of God. In a way, unnecessary to explain, I heard at an early date that provision had been made for the comfortable support of my wife and children. That I am still in the land of the living is unknown to them. If it be God’s will, I am content to remain here till my course is finished ; and to lay my bones in this sweet valley where I first found happiness.

“Although there are some reasons that would lead me to wish to return to the living world, yet when I reflect upon the character of that world—when I remember what I was when I mingled with it, and when I consider the deleterious influences that are constantly emanating from it, I shudder, and shrink from the thought of entering again upon that fearful arena of danger and death.

“Still that my life is continued, and my strength preserved, seems to be a divine intimation that I have something to do. I have sought the divine direction ; and resolved to abide by the decision of Providence. If this manuscript ever comes to light, which I now commit to the waters of the Hudson, and search is made for me, I shall deem it my duty to leave this retreat, and again revisit the living world, relying upon the power of my Redeemer. But, if this perishes in those waters, I shall conclude that it is the will of Heaven that my bones should sleep in this glen till the resurrection morn.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE SEQUEL.

“Praise, my soul, the God that sought thee,
Wretched wanderer far astray;
Found thee lost, and kindly brought thee
From the paths of death away.”

MR. COLCHESTER, having thus given us this very singular account, proceeded as follows, with a sketch of his own religious history.

“The narrative of the reformed profligate was listened to with profound attention. So singular and striking were the facts rehearsed, that for several minutes after I laid down the manuscript, every individual in this rustic audience kept his station and remained silent, as though waiting to hear what his neighbour should first say.

“‘Well, that’s a marvellous story,’ at length said the landlord, hitching his chair forward, first on one side and then the other.

“‘Poh! I thought we were go’n to hear about where some treasures were hid,’ said a rough and ragged looking fellow, who stood leaning over a chair, and whose name, as it afterwards appeared, was Wager.

“‘Yes,’ said his neighbour, who sat in the chair over which he was leaning; ‘I’d give more for a little *chink* than a thousand such stories.’

“‘This story has told us where treasures are hid,’ replied a plain, but clever looking man, sitting on the other side of the room. ‘It says that treasures are hid in the Prayer Book. And this is what my good old mother used

Impression upon Mr. Colchester's mind.

to say. And I believe she has gone to heaven. She used to say that this was a precious book, and in her opinion next to the Bible.'

" 'Poh ! for such treasures, friend Hamar,' vociferated Wager ; ' that 'are *Praying* Book may do for old gran-nies, and crazy hermits, and such like—but let me have a little of the *paying* treasure.'

" ' I suppose you'd think *the pearl of great price* wasn't worth picking up if you should find it in the street,' said Mr. Hamar, with some warmth : but the remark was evidently lost upon the obtuse mind of his neighbour.

" ' They are the Episcopal's,' said a thin old looking man, drawing his chair near to Mr. Hamar ; ' they are the Episcopal's, a'nt they, who have the Prayer Book ?'

" ' Episcopalians,' replied Mr. Hamar.

" ' I have heard tell,' said he, ' that that order of folks have got a meeting house in P——.'

" Upon this Wager started up, and said,

" ' Well, friend Hamar, if you're a mind to, I'll go with you next Sunday to P——, to see how they carry on with this wonderful Prayer Book, that this hermit tells about.'

" Just at this moment, the landlord told me that my bed was ready, and as I had no desire to remain to hear this gossip, I gladly availed myself of the opportunity to retire, and be by myself.

" The story in *The Manuscript* had awakened in my mind a train of thoughts of the most serious character : I longed to be alone that I might commune with my own heart. The thought which was uppermost in my mind was, that there is something in religion which I am a stranger to, and while a stranger to it, I am unfit to die. My thoughts all that night, while asleep and awake, were upon the hermit in the forest of Lucerne. I could see the old man amid those wild solitudes on his bended knees pouring out his soul in prayer to God. He was seldom from my thoughts during the next two days. Having per-

The services of a village church.The aged minister.

formed something of a circuit, I had returned by the third morning to the village of P——, which was only a few miles distant from the inn, the scene of the adventure I have just related. It was Sunday, and I determined to go to the house of God. The remark that I heard in the inn then occurred to me, that there was an Episcopal church in this place. Upon inquiry I found this to be the fact; and I therefore immediately repaired to that house of worship. I had but just taken my seat, when the service commenced. Every thing appeared new and strange to me. There was something *peculiar* in the worship that was offered up around me. I do not allude so much to its being a form; for as for that matter I had always been accustomed to a form. The worthy old Baptist clergyman, under whose ministry I was brought up, as far as I had any religious bringing up, and who I believe was truly a pious man, and one who wished to promote the salvation of sinners, though he often used to denounce forms, and formularies of worship, invariably introduced into his prayers the same ideas, put up the same petitions, and usually addressed the throne of grace, with a few slight variations, in precisely the same words. It was not, therefore, the form that struck me as singular, so much as the peculiar character of this worship. It differed from all other modes of worship that I had ever witnessed. I had been accustomed to hear the minister conduct the worship entirely by himself. But here the people had a part to perform. It appeared to me to be emphatically and eminently a *joint and social worship*.

“When the minister took his station in the pulpit, my attention, which had previously been intensely fixed upon the service, was directed more particularly to the preacher. His appearance was truly venerable. Age had stamped his signet upon his wrinkled brow, and whitened locks, and stooping form. His whole appearance gave to the hearer the impression that he was indeed standing on the verge of eternity, and in view of the judgment bar. The passage upon which he discoursed was taken from Job xxxiii.

An abstract of a sermon.

14. *For God speaketh once, yea twice, and man perceiveth it not.*

“The general scope of the discourse went to show the various ways in which God speaks to men, the purpose for which he speaks, and the manner in which his communications are received.

“Under the first head he remarked,

“‘1. That God speaks through the works of nature. That every mountain and glen—every rock and grain of sand—every tree and flower, had a tongue to tell us of the power and wisdom of God. That every twinkling star in the vault of heaven had a voice full of instruction, if we would but attend to it.

“‘2. Jehovah speaks through his providence. All the blessings and ills of life—sickness and health—death and bereavement, each one of these comes as the messenger of the Most High, to announce some lesson of instruction.

“‘3. God speaks through his word and ministers.

“Under the second head he remarked,

“‘*That the grand purpose of all this speaking was to make men wise and happy.*’

“While contemplating the last consideration, *the manner in which God’s communications are received*, he became warm with his subject, and spoke with an energy that riveted every eye upon him.

“‘God hath spoken,’ said this venerable patriarch, as he stood before his people with silver locks, and a countenance lightened up with almost unearthly animation, and from which beamed affection and love; ‘*God hath spoken once, yea, twice*—may I not rather say a thousand times, to you my hearers, through the unworthy ambassador that now stands before you? But these weakened joints—this feeble frame, and this trembling voice admonish me, that he will speak to you through this medium but a few times more. My work is almost done. I am well aware that I shall soon be called to give an account of the souls committed to my care. And what shall I say to the Judge eternal?

Affecting appeal of an aged minister.

“ ‘O, I shall have to tell him that I spoke to you in his name for more than twenty years, and yet,’—here the big tear rolled down his aged and withered cheek, ‘and yet *ye perceived it not*. Ye heard not—ye obeyed not the voice of God.

“ ‘To-day the Son of God, the memorials of whose broken and bleeding body are to be offered to your acceptance, speaks to you as from the cross, *Come unto me, and receive the gift of eternal life*. I say the Son of God is this day speaking to every individual in this house. I hear his voice issuing from that altar, *Do this in remembrance of me*. But O! how many there are in this assembly that do not perceive, do not hear this voice! There will come a time, however, when even the impenitent will perceive that God speaks. When the Judge takes his seat in the clouds—and the earth and the sea trembling beneath the blast of the archangel’s trump, shall surrender their sleeping dead—and the elements shall melt with fervent heat—and Jesus, the Judge of all, shall say to each trembling, guilty soul, *Give an account of thy stewardship*, then the scoffing, careless, stupid sinner will perceive, in those startling accents, the voice of an omnipotent God.’

“ I had taken a seat in the gallery, and from my situation could not only have a full view of the preacher, but could observe the effect produced upon the audience by this discourse. My eye this moment happened to rest upon two countenances that I thought I had seen before. For a moment I could not recall the place where I had met them, but I soon recognised in them two of my auditors at the inn, *Wager* and *Hamar*.

“ Wager’s countenance at this moment had lost all that reckless, swaggering air, which usually characterized it, and from its risen and rigid muscles plainly indicated that deep and uncommon feeling had been roused within.

“ But my mind was too much occupied with its own reflections, to bestow many thoughts upon the objects or beings around me. The voice of conscience seemed thus

Convictions of sin—how deepened.

to whisper in my ear, *God hath spoken to thee once, yea twice*, in the history of the ‘reformed profligate;’ now he hath spoken to thee again by the mouth of his servant, and if thou art disobedient to the heavenly voice, what security hast thou that thy damnation will not shortly be sealed for ever? I felt that this was indeed a solemn appeal; and I solemnly promised that I would from that moment begin to seek the salvation of my soul.

“The communion was to be administered, and I remained, as well as most of the congregation, to witness that solemn service. The parts alluded to in the manuscript struck me with great force.

“And when in the conclusion, all arose to ascribe *glory to God on high*, I could not but think of the remark there made, *It seemed as though I was standing in the porch of heaven, and had caught the echo of that angelic worship that goeth up around the throne.*

“That petitionary part, which, while it rose in triumphant strains, still invoked mercy, *O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us: Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us:—*this part sent a thrill through my soul which no language can describe. ‘O!’ said I to myself, ‘that these voices would never cease: that I might stand here from day to day, and hear the voice of these worshippers thus ascend on high.’

“I left the church with a troubled mind. Just as I was descending the door-steps, wrapped in my own reflections, I felt some one touching my arm. I looked around, and recognised my acquaintance Wager. His appearance was far less repulsive than when I first met him at the inn. His countenance was unusually sedate, as he thus addressed me:—

“‘Well, squire,’ such was the appellation with which he accosted me, ‘this ’ere is a very solemn meeting to go to.’

“‘I hope we shall all derive benefit from what we have heard,’ said I.

Self-communion.

Means of grace.

“ ‘Yes, yes,’ said he, ‘I like it so well, I guess I shall come again, though I have four miles to travel over a bad road, and that on my own feet.’

“ Bidding him good morning, I went to my lodgings to commune with my own heart. I there resolved, on my knees, to seek first of all, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. I did not forget this determination. Having completed my tour, I entered upon the use of a steady and systematic course of means; such as daily prayer, self-examination, and reading the Scriptures. These means were speedily blessed to me, and my mind settled in firm and tranquil reliance upon the promises of God through Christ. My attention, as you may well imagine, was directed at an early period to an examination of the doctrines of the Episcopal church. This examination led to the discovery of a striking agreement between this church and the primitive church, in its ministry, doctrines, and worship. From convictions of duty, I therefore attached myself to this communion. And ten years’ use of the liturgy has confirmed me in my first impressions, that no uninspired book that I ever read, is imbued with so deep a spirit of piety and devotion as *the Book of Common Prayer*.”

The tour.Accident.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROVIDENTIAL DEVELOPEMENT.

“Though all seems lost, ’tis impious to despair ;
The tracks of Providence like rivers wind.”

MR. COLCHESTER had still several incidents to relate by way of illustrating what had gone before ; and he, therefore, continued his remarks, as follows :—

“The third summer had robbed the earth in all the rich luxuriance of vegetable life, before I again had occasion to pass through that section of country, in which lay the scene of the occurrences that I have just described.

“I had undertaken to make this tour in a one-horse vehicle, and as I approached the vicinity of the village of P——, the surrounding country called up many associations, and trains of thought full of interest and solemnity. It was just at the close of a warm summer’s day. The heat had begun to decline, and the freshness of evening to breathe upon me. I was descending a hill, almost lost in my own meditations, and paying very little attention to my horse, when one of the wheels of my carriage suddenly came off. The horse took fright, and dashed forward with the fleetness of the wind. I was scarcely conscious of any thing, till I found myself sitting on the ground, and saw an old gentleman running towards me with apparent perturbation and concern.

“‘I hope,’ said he, almost out of breath, ‘I hope you are not seriously injured!’

“‘I think I am not,’ said I, making an effort to rise.

“‘It is of the Lord’s goodness,’ said he, extending his

The escape.

Country scene.

hand to assist me, 'that you are alive. When I saw the horse descending the hill with such fury, I thought you must have inevitably been dashed to pieces. If you feel able to walk to the house, we will do every thing in our power to make you comfortable, and prevent any serious effects resulting from this disaster.'

"While thanking him for his kindness, two or three labouring men came up. He ordered them to see to the horse, and collect the fractured pieces of the wagon, and then told me to lean upon his arm, and that of one of the workmen, and thus we went towards his house. It stood some forty or fifty rods back from the road, and was approached by a lane or avenue. I soon found that I could walk without difficulty, and that I had escaped without broken bones. I was met at the door by the female part of the family, with countenances full of sympathy and concern: and all the kindness and attention which the unfortunate man that fell among thieves, received from the hands of the good Samaritan, were promptly extended to me.

"Taking my seat in the door, where I could inhale the fresh air, my mind soon settled down into a peaceful and collected frame. The providential escape I had made very naturally lifted up my thoughts in grateful acknowledgment to that almighty Preserver, who had just saved my life from destruction, and without whose knowledge and permission not a sparrow falleth to the ground.

"The scene around me was calculated to inspire calm and serious feelings. Mr. Sinclair's residence—such was the name of the family under whose hospitable roof I was sitting—was a plain substantial farmhouse, situated at the foot of a range of hills, extending north and south. On the east side of the house, an expanded valley spread out in all the beauty of a rich and diversified landscape. It was traversed in the centre by a winding rivulet, and covered through its whole extent with the various and exuberant productions of a fertile soil.

"Immediately before the house was a large corn-field—

Domestic arrangements.

an object by no means uninteresting to the eye that loves to gaze upon the wonderful works of God. And while sitting in this contemplative mood, there came upon my ear those rural sounds which exhilarate the spirit and fill the soul with peace.

“There was one thing that particularly pleased me in relation to this family. I found before retiring for the night, the protection of God was invoked. I always feel interested in every place where there is an altar to the Lord.

“The next morning I found it would require most of the day to get my wagon again in a state of repair; and, as I was warmly solicited by the family to remain a few days with them, my business not being urgent, I made up my mind to avail myself of their polite invitation, and not renew my journey until I had entirely recovered from the effects of the jar I had received in being thrown from the wagon. I could not but feel myself quite at home in the bosom of this kind and hospitable family. Their conversation and intercourse evinced a knowledge of the world and a degree of refinement which showed that they had not always been accustomed to this retired mode of life. Still they all seemed to engage in the respective duties of the kitchen and the field, with the alacrity and cheerfulness of those who find satisfaction and pleasure in discharging, to the best of their ability, the duties connected with the station that Providence has assigned them.

“There was something in the conversation and kind-hearted hospitality of Mr. Sinclair, that made me unwilling to leave his roof. He was truly a pious and benevolent man. The spirit of the gospel seemed to animate and influence all that he said and did. In the domestic arrangements and regulations of the family, I found much to admire. Morning and evening devotion was conducted under this roof in a manner that showed, that with them it was not a mere matter of form, but that God was worshipped in spirit and truth. Family prayers were not put off to a very late hour in the evening, when the younger members

Family prayer.

of the household were in bed, and those who remained up, so near being asleep, that the evening oblation was a drowsy, tedious task. But the family were assembled at an early hour, when the faculties of all were still fresh and active ; and none were permitted to retire until God's protection had been invoked, and his great name honoured with suitable adoration. So also in the morning, whatever might be the engagements within and without doors, the family were regularly convened for prayer.

“ I have known some Christians, who were uniform in their evening devotions, to excuse themselves from offering the morning oblation on account of the want of time, and their anxiety to get to their business at an early hour. O that such Christians had more of the spirit of their heavenly Master ! He could *rise up a great while before day* for prayer. What a rebuke is this upon the indolence, and sloth, and impiety of those who frame such miserable pretexts to excuse themselves from one of the most delightful and heavenly duties in which the Christian is permitted to engage ! How can that man love his family, who can leave them morning after morning without assembling them around the family altar, to commend them to the Most High, and implore his blessing upon them ! And how stupid and preposterous is the supposition that the time spent in prayer is lost ! as though our business could prosper without the aid of Heaven !

“ Mr. Sinclair thought the time spent in family prayer the best employed of any during the day, even in a secular point of view. And it is undoubtedly true, that when the first-fruits of the day are consecrated to God, the remainder will be more likely to be spent in a way to advance our worldly as well as spiritual interests. Acting upon this principle, and also with a view to their eternal well-being, Mr. Sinclair had all his workmen and domestics called in at the hour of prayer. Upon this point he was very strict. A little occurrence which I was privy to, during my stay with them, will illustrate this remark.

A father's gentle rebuke.

“ Julia Sinclair, the youngest daughter, a girl of about fourteen, one morning did not come down early enough to be present at family worship. In the course of the morning, while her father was engaged in the garden, Julia went out to spend a few moments in weeding a flower bed. The window of the room I occupied opened immediately into the garden, and I was so near that I could distinctly hear the conversation that passed.

“ ‘ Come here, my daughter,’ said Mr. Sinclair: ‘ see what a beautiful flower is growing here. How delicate the texture—how rich the colours—how exquisitely are they laid on ! What pencil but that dipt in uncreated light can paint like this ! Then consider the ten thousand invisible ducts and channels through which the moisture is absorbed, the air inhaled, and the juices conveyed through every segment of this flower. How curious, and complicated, and wonderful its vascular system ! The same Being who looks upon this little flower, and moves the subtile lymph through its unseen capillary tubes, looks through all the amplitudes of infinity, guides the stars in their courses, and *upholds all worlds !* Do you not think, my dear, that this glorious Being ought to be regarded with the highest reverence and respect ?’

“ ‘ Certainly, my dear father,’ replied Julia.

“ ‘ Well, my child, if Mr. —, the governor, should send me word to-day, that he would favour us with a call to-morrow at a certain hour, do you not think it would be treating him with great disrespect, if we were not at home to receive him at the appointed hour ?’

“ ‘ Certainly,’ answered the daughter; ‘ and I do not think that we could be guilty of so great a piece of rudeness.’

“ ‘ And yet, my daughter, I did not see you this morning, at prayers, when the great Eternal, who painted this flower, and has stamped his glory upon the tablet of the skies, met us. And was this treating the morning visit of your Creator and almighty Preserver with respect ?’

Penitence.

The manuscript.

“All this was spoken with the tenderness of a fond and affectionate father. Julia could not say a word. Her head drooped upon her shoulder, and the tears gushed down her cheeks. At length she flung her arms around the neck of her venerable father, and half-choked with emotion, faintly articulated, ‘*Do forgive me.*’

“‘God is the Being, my child,’ said the old man, evidently touched with the sensibility evinced by his daughter, ‘against whom the offence was committed. If you are truly penitent, and apply to his pardoning mercy, with sincere purposes of amendment, he will doubtless blot out this sin from the book of his remembrance. But be sure, never to repeat it again.’

“From the prayers that were used in the family, and certain expressions that were incidentally dropped, I was fully persuaded, that the people with whom I was staying were conversant with the Episcopal form of worship, and were probably members of the Episcopal church. The evening before I left, the conversation turned upon the peculiarities of the different denominations of Christians, and I then became assured that I had judged correctly in relation to the religious sentiments of this family. As the conversation proceeded, I was unconsciously drawn into a narration of the circumstances which I have related to you this evening. When I came to the circumstance of *The Manuscript*, I perceived that Mr. Sinclair appeared somewhat agitated, and before I finished the narrative Mrs. Sinclair seemed affected in a manner, and to a degree, for which I could not account.

“The next morning, having taken an affectionate leave of the family, Mr. Sinclair begged me to permit him to walk on a little way with me, until the wagon, which was then harnessing, should overtake us. To this proposition I very cheerfully acceded. As soon as we reached the road,

“‘I cannot let you depart,’ said my venerable host, ‘without apprizing you that he who now addresses you,

Singular disclosure.

The reflections of a recluse.

The result.

and who in this section of the country is called *Sinclair*, is "*the Reformed Profligate*," "*the Hermit of Lucerne*," who penned *The Manuscript*, the contents of which you so feelingly related last evening.

" 'After writing that manuscript, I daily became more and more convinced, that as a Christian I could not discharge my duty without again entering the living world. I could not but remember that I had a family—and that no act of mine could release me from the obligations resting upon me as a father and a husband. The law of Christianity bound me to look after them and provide for them.

" 'Again, I remembered that Christ had instituted certain ordinances and sacraments for the spiritual nourishment and edification of his followers. These sacraments and ordinances were committed to and connected with his church. While remaining in a state of voluntary exile from the living world, I felt that I was voluntarily depriving myself of a powerful means of grace—refusing to honour Christ in the observance of his holy institutions—and actually declining to bear testimony to the power of that grace which had plucked my feet from the paths of death, and given me *an inheritance among them which are sanctified*.

" 'Influenced by these considerations, I left my seclusion, and sought out my family. Divine Providence opened a way for the purchase of this farm. And here we now live in sweet retirement. Our former history being unknown to our neighbours, we often have it in our power to minister to their spiritual necessities. We are perfectly contented with the allotment of Providence—and have no desire to know or be known in the gay and fashionable world.

" 'For myself, I can truly say, that I feel that God has *shown the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards me through Christ Jesus*. And I hope that the evening of my days will be spent in his service, and to his glory : and I hope, sir, that I shall be remembered in your prayers, that I may redeem the time, and be found ready

A funeral scene.

with my lamp trimmed and burning, and all my hopes in Christ, when the summons arrives which will speedily call me into the presence of the Judge.'

"The wagon had now come up. And we again took leave of each other. As I turned to catch a last look of the stooping form of this aged and redeemed servant of the Lord, my mind was naturally led to dwell upon the manner in which Divine Providence had dealt with him, and the influence which his history had had in bringing me to a knowledge of the truth: and I could not but exclaim, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.'

"As I approached the village of P——, I perceived a funeral procession just entering the burial ground, which was a little out of the village, in a sweet retired spot. As the road passed along on one side of this resting place of the dead, I reined up my horse to the fence, and remained to see the last office of respect paid to one who had for ever closed his eyes upon earthly scenes. I soon discovered that the deceased was an adult person, and that his death was keenly felt by many that mingled in the crowd.

"The funeral service was read with evident feeling and deep emotion. And I thought its words never fell with deeper solemnity upon my ear. The grave at last was covered. The multitude began to retire and disperse. Near where I sat, a horse was tied to the fence.

"A stout looking person now approached this horse, and began to unfasten him. I perceived that he was deeply affected: for several times while undoing the halter, he raised his arm to his face to brush away the tears that were coursing down his cheeks.

"'Can you tell me,' said I, addressing myself to this man, 'whose remains have just been interred?'

"'O, it is our minister!' said he, with much emotion, 'it is our minister!—Good old man, he has gone to his reward.'

The conclusion.

“ ‘ Ah,’ said I, ‘ I have no doubt he has, as he was faithful, I trust, while he was with you.’

“ ‘ Yes, yes, that he was,’ said the man, who appeared to find relief in descanting upon the excellencies of his departed shepherd. ‘ All have reason to remember Mr. — with affection, but none more than I. It is only a little more than two years since I first saw him. But by the mercy of God, since that time my eyes have been opened—and I have seen what a cast-away I was, and what a merciful Saviour there is to go to ; and all this is chiefly owing to Mr. —’s plain preaching.’

“ I this moment recognised in the speaker my old acquaintance Wager, who had indeed become an altered and new man : and had now learned—as he told me with his own lips, to esteem the Prayer Book as much as he once despised it.”

The incidents already related furnish abundant proof that there is much to interest the observant traveller in the daily occurrences with which he meets. And even when he finds every thing around him repulsive—when he finds every thing in the road and weather discouraging, and every thing in the inn abhorrent to his feelings, he can still find profitable material for thought, as one did who said,—

“ The world is like an inn ; for there
Men call, and storm, and drink, and swear ;
While undisturb’d a Christian waits,
And reads, and writes, and meditates.
Though in the dark oft-times I stray,
The Lord shall light me on my way,
And to the city of the sun,
Conduct me, when my journey’s done.”

Having illustrated the position with which I set out, I will no longer detain the reader, but simply ask him to cherish in his memory whatever he deems valuable in the conversation that occurred on the occasion of THE MEETING OF THE TRAVELLERS.

MARY MAYWOOD.

CHAPTER I.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

The least is greatest ; and who shall
Appear the greatest are the least of all.

QUARLES.

It is a striking peculiarity in the lessons of wisdom taught by the Son of God—a peculiarity essentially interwoven with every precept he delivered, that *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. The lower we keep in the vale of humility, the higher we shall rise in the regard of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. He promises to take up his abode only with the humble and contrite ones. This direct thrust which the gospel makes at the pride of the human heart, bespeaks its high, and holy, and heavenly character. It is no small commendation to the religion of the cross, that it requires every human being, whether young or old, high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, to humble himself before God, and commence the foundation of Christian character upon lowly and self-abased views respecting any personal or native moral excellence which he possesses. The true Christian character is invariably built on a deep and heartfelt ac-

The wisdom and benignity of the gospel.

knowledge, not unlike that of the afflicted patriarch ; *Behold I am vile : what shall I answer thee ? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. ' I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'* This humility, which the gospel, wherever it is truly received, uniformly awakens, is one of its striking excellencies.

Another singular excellence in the religion of Christ is, that while it disclaims all interference with the organization or constitution of civil society, leaving every community and nation to settle in their own way the particular form of civil government under which they choose to live, it at the same time, by the heavenly influence it exerts, and the kindred and assimilating spirit it awakens, throws such a softened and benign aspect over the several otherwise odious attitudes in which different classes and ranks stand in relation to each other, that to the Christian eye the whole human race appears like one great, happy, and well-regulated family. As things are constituted in this world, there must be different employments and occupations ; and, therefore, there must be different ranks and grades in society. There must be the employer and the employed, the householder and the servant. By this arrangement the well-being and happiness of all are augmented and secured. Nothing is more remote from the truth, than the supposition, that the happiness of those who by the allotment of Providence are obliged to procure their livelihood by acting in the capacity of domestics or servants, is promoted by cherishing a spirit of insubordination, peevishness, or discontent—or by evincing a disposition to require a degree of deference and respect, to which neither their characters nor their station entitle them. I know perfectly well, that every situation has its trials. The servant undoubtedly has a thousand painful conflicts of feeling known only to those in that humble station. The Saviour of men, however, can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, for it was “ the form of a servant ” which he assumed when he came

The influence of the gospel.

to redeem our ruined world. The religion of Christ meets every difficulty, and sheds rays of brightness over every relation in life. This religion, by imparting to the master and the servant the same divine principle, constitutes them "*fellow-heirs*"—and "of the same body," and partakers of the same promise in Christ, and therefore unites them by a heavenly and immortal relation—a relation which endears them to each other infinitely more than any of the artificial or temporary ties of society. Thus connected, living under the same roof—meeting daily around the same family altar, the cheerfulness, promptitude, and satisfaction with which the servant performs the duties of his station, and the kind and affectionate treatment which the master uniformly and almost unconsciously extends to him, show that their hearts have been knit together by a more than earthly tie; and that their happiness is not in the slightest degree impaired by the difference in their stations.

The servant whose mind has been brought under the abiding influence of "pure and undefiled religion," can enjoy himself, and be useful in the service of families that know not the blessings that flow from a union with God. He can and must do his duty in that state of life in which God hath placed him. Having done his duty, he will have peace within—a peace which the world cannot give, and which wicked men cannot take away. The Christian servant, convinced that the casting of his lot was from God, will make no vain or foolish efforts to rise above his station, but seek to perform his duty in it with a contented mind. And acting thus, his happiness will be greatly augmented. Often is it the case, that the humble servant, that waits at the table, or performs the menial offices of the kitchen in some lordly mansion, is infinitely happier than the wealthy and honoured possessor of that mansion, and will, when the awards of the last day are settled, take a higher seat among those who are favoured with a place around the throne of the Lamb. These remarks have been suggested by the incidents contained in the following nar-

The influence of a single domestic.

rative, which came into my hands a number of years since, and from a source which entitles the statements to the highest confidence. The reader must regard the person who communicated the facts—not the author—as speaking, in all that follows to the end of the narrative.

A few years since I was spending two or three weeks in Mr. Wilson's family, who were at the time residing in P——. They were indeed most kind and hospitable people, and did every thing to make my temporary residence with them delightful. My attention, at a very early period, was drawn to the admirable and well-regulated arrangement that pervaded the entire establishment. The whole system of domestic operations seemed to go on with the stillness, order, and effect of a well-contrived and well-worked machine. The meals were brought to the table at the appointed hour. There never was the least indication of hurry or bustle—but every thing appeared to be done “decently and in order.” Yet in this establishment the domestics were not numerous. Each one had his whole time occupied.

I have ever felt a deep interest in the welfare of servants. My attention, therefore, was particularly directed to those attached to this household. I soon perceived that an important agent in all these well conducted operations, was a female servant, whom they called Mary. I afterwards learnt that her name was *Mary Maywood*. She was at this time about thirty-five years old. Her appropriate office was that of cook ; but as her object was to render herself useful, when her services were not needed in that capacity, she waited at the table, or readily turned her hand to any business that required immediate attention. The first thing which particularly attracted my notice was, the uniform neatness of her person—the simplicity of her dress—the unvarying cheerfulness of her looks, and the kind, pleasant

An irascible man.

and respectful manner in which she invariably spoke to those around her. When she went to the door to answer to the bell, the visiter was not repelled by the rudeness of her manners, or shocked by the disgusting appearance of her person. This is an evil too frequently encountered at the door of many a worthy and estimable family; and I am well persuaded, the fault is usually with the servant.

An occurrence which happened about a week after I had taken up my residence in Mr. Wilson's family, increased the interest I had already began to feel in Mary Maywood.

Mr. Wilson had a brother staying with him at this time, a young man naturally amiable, but of a fierce and irascible temper, which, as I subsequently learnt, was a constitutional weakness with the family. Mary, in the discharge of the various duties incumbent upon her, among other things had the care of his room. The morning to which I allude, in looking over a desk which he seldom locked, he discovered, as he thought, that some twenty dollars were missing from a pocket-book usually kept in the desk. Notwithstanding the well known integrity of her character, he formed the hasty conclusion that *Mary* had been acting the part of a thief. He came down to the breakfast table, therefore, in a state of high excitement. The family were already gathered around the table, and he took his seat in silence. But it was evident, from his dark knit brows, and flushed countenance, that a storm was raging within. Mary no sooner entered the room, being engaged in bringing up some part of the breakfast, than with the utmost abruptness, and with a total want of regard for those at the table, he began in a most violent and passionate tone to fix the charge of theft upon this worthy domestic. The family appeared horror-struck. They tried to expostulate with him, but this only rendered him the more irritated and vociferous. He said he knew that she had purloined the money—that there was no other way of accounting for its absence. Had any person out of the house taken it, he would have taken the

The triumph of Christian patience.

pocket-book as well as the money. No one else had been to the room.

Mary all this time stood meek and silent. It was evident, however, that her feelings were deeply wounded. The rush of blood to her cheek, as she patiently stood, and bore all this tirade of abuse, bespoke the conscious innocence of her heart. When his paroxysm of passion had somewhat subsided, Mary, with evident feeling, but yet in the most respectful manner, said,

“Sir, to assure you of my innocence would not probably alter your opinion—but there is One,” and as she spoke she raised her eyes to heaven—“there is One that knows that my hands are clean, and with him I must leave my vindication.”

Mr. Wilson requested his brother to hand him the pocket-book from which the money was missing. He did so. Upon examining the different compartments, he discovered the twenty dollars in a fold which had been overlooked. This was a moment of deep mortification to the young man. But Mary put on none of the insolence of triumph. Her manner continued unaltered: and in her subsequent deportment to the person who had so unfeelingly assailed her, there was no perceivable change.

A short time after this, as I was one day passing the kitchen door, my attention became arrested by a conversation that was going on within. As I was not perceived, I stopt a moment, when I heard Mary saying,

“It is not that I wish to deprive you of any comfort, Ralph Hagar, that I protest against your helping yourself from the store-room, but because I think it absolutely wrong and sinful.”

“Poh”—replied Ralph, who was a careless, good-natured fellow, but a stranger to those conscientious principles which should govern every servant, and who had just been helping himself to some luxuries in the pantry—“how can it be wrong to eat what we like? We are to have our living where we do our work—this is a part of the bargain.”

Conscientious views.

“But,” said the far more conscientious Mary, “our employers have a right to assign us what food they think proper. They always supply us with that which is good, and enough of it. Now, I think, to take any other food is breaking the eighth commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*. What they have not given us is no more ours than that which is in our neighbour’s, Mr. Palmer’s, pantry.”

“I think you are quite too squeamish, Mary,” replied Ralph—“at this rate, you will deprive yourself of all comfort.”

“Nothing can give me so much comfort,” was her answer, “as a clear conscience.”

“Well,” said Ralph—“I have a clear conscience.”

“Ah! be careful that it is not a *seared* conscience,” answered Mary. “And now that I am speaking on this subject, I will just hint at one or two things which you perhaps do not think enough of—and one of these is, that your time, since Mr. Wilson pays you for it, is *his*, just as much as any thing else which he has bought with his money.”

“Well,” answered Ralph, “what have you to accuse me of on this score?”

“Why,” said Mary, “I think you often take much longer time to eat than is necessary, and when Mr. Wilson is absent, you frequently lie in bed till seven o’clock. Now, if you read your Bible more, I think you would be convinced that this was wrong.”

The door, which had been left ajar, was now closed, and I heard no more of the conversation. But the remarks of Mary, together with what I had before seen in her, so far interested me, that I felt a great desire to be made acquainted with her history. Having expressed this desire to Mrs. Wilson, she took the earliest opportunity to put me in the way of receiving this information from Mary herself.

CHAPTER II.

HOW MARY WAS BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

From the 19th Psalm.

ONE afternoon, while I was sitting in the parlour conversing with Mrs. Wilson, Mary came in. Mrs. Wilson immediately observed to Mary, that I wished to have some conversation with her, and then left the room.

I asked Mary to sit down, and then remarked, " That I felt a deep interest in every soul brought under the influence of sanctifying grace ; but that I was constrained to look with intenser interest upon the washed and sanctified servant ; inasmuch as those in that station were so frequently unmindful of their soul's best interest. That the purpose for which I wished to converse with her, therefore, was, to learn the manner in which her mind had been enlightened by divine truth."

After a moment's hesitation, with much diffidence she replied in substance as follows : " I am not surprised that one who loves God, and knows the worth of the soul, should look with interest upon every instance of piety seen in the walks of life in which I am treading. I am well aware how rare those instances are. The great majority of servants live and act as though there were no judgment bar, before which they were one day to stand—no all-seeing God to take note of their doings. I was once among that number. It is owing entirely to the infinite mercy of God in Christ, that I am not now ranked with the thoughtless and impenitent.

Early habits and views of Mary.

“My mother was a widow. Having a large family, and being in straitened circumstances, it became necessary for me to go out to service. We lived in the country, and there, as you know, those who work in different families are regarded as *HELP*, rather than as servants.

“I resided with a number of families, but stayed at no place any length of time. My besetting sin was pride. I had embraced the absurd idea that I was handsome, and uncommonly smart. I, therefore, considered myself far superior to ordinary girls, and expected to be treated in every family as a companion of the lady of the house. I thus got altogether above my business, and was ready to kindle into passion the moment any unpleasant work was put upon me, or I did not receive all the attention I thought myself entitled to. Few families, of course, wanted such help, and I soon lost my place. Or, if the family could put up with my sulky and pouting moods, I soon became exasperated with some occurrence, and left them of my own accord.

“After leaving a place where I had been at service, I never thought of seeking another until compelled to by absolute want. I used to go to my mother’s, and stay, till having expended all my little earnings in some finery, or extravagant article of dress, I was forced to make another experiment at service. While running this course of folly, ‘walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting myself in vain,’ I entered Mr. Wilson’s family, who were then residing in the neighbourhood of my mother. I had not been with them more than a week, before I became dissatisfied, and determined to leave them. I was ordered to roast a loin of veal. I placed it at the fire, and thought I would make an effort to have it done in such a way, that I should be commended for my superior skill. But in a short time the sound of a drum caught my ear. It was a general muster. I could not refrain from going out to see the parade: and I had the vanity to suppose that my own person might thus attract the notice of some admiring eye. I

Rash determination.

Effect of kindness.

looked, and loitered, till the veal was entirely forgotten. When I returned, I found it almost completely spoiled. My inattention drew a sharp and irritating reproof upon me at dinner, from Mr. Wilson. This was enough. No matter whether innocent or guilty, I could not bear being found the least fault with. My temper was immediately up. My pride had been deeply wounded. I went directly to my chamber, put on my hat, and collected my things together, determining to leave the house that very hour, thereby showing a proper spirit of resentment. But upon examination, I found that I had several articles of dress in the wash, which I could not well carry with me. I, therefore, upon a second thought, concluded that I would wait till the next morning.

“The next morning Mr. Wilson left home to be absent several weeks. Immediately after his departure, Mrs. Wilson came down into the kitchen. I thought her manner unusually kind and winning. *She* had always treated me well, but at this time she seemed so affectionate that I could not but love her. Before she went out, she took from her indispensable a dress handkerchief, and asked me if I would accept it. I thanked her: and before the sound of her foot was lost upon my ear, my former determination was altered. I resolved I would not leave the family during the absence of Mr. Wilson. ‘But,’ said I to myself, ‘the first moment he returns I will quit his house for ever. He shall know that I am not to be trampled upon like a worm.’

“About a week after this, a minister, the Rev. Mr. I——, being a connexion of the family, came to Mr. Wilson’s, and upon their earnest solicitation consented to spend a few weeks with them. The first evening after his arrival I witnessed what I never had before—*family prayer*. The families with whom I had lived had been worldly people: and my mother, though a kind and clever woman, was herself a stranger to all sense of religion. I do not know that I ever saw a Bible in her house after I was old

First serious impression how made.

enough to read or understand it: and, although I sometimes went to church, I never thought of attending to what was said. Mr. I——'s prayer was very solemn, but most likely I should not have attended to it, had he not besought the blessing of God upon the absent head of the family. I cherished so much resentment toward Mr. Wilson, I could not bear to have him prayed for. But my attention was soon drawn to another topic. In language, the most devout, solemn, and affecting, Mr. I—— implored God to pour down his blessing upon the domestics of this household, to enlighten their minds, sanctify their hearts, and make them servants of Christ, and sons and daughters of Jehovah. I marked and remembered these words. They produced the first serious impression I ever felt. I had very imperfect notions of the character of God, and was extremely ignorant of every thing contained in the Scriptures. The prayer of this man of God was still in my mind. Is it possible, thought I, that this stranger takes any interest in me? And yet how fervently he besought God to bless me. This dwelt upon my mind for some time, but at length I fell asleep. In the morning the impression was entirely gone.

“Family worship, however, was now set up, and never omitted. In the evening Mr. I—— usually read a chapter, and made such practical remarks as he thought would be useful. For several evenings he selected such portions as led him to dwell upon the character, attributes, and government of God. My mind had become partially enlightened, and my heart somewhat affected by these plain, familiar remarks, for he spoke in a way that riveted my attention. When alone, I at times trembled to think that a pure and holy God was continually looking upon all my doings.

“One Wednesday evening, after he had been with us about a week,—I shall never forget that evening—Mr. I—— read a part of the second chapter of *Romans*, and in his remarks he spoke chiefly of the purity, excellence, and strictness of the divine law—the impossibility of our

The Bible your best friend.

keeping it wholly—and the awful curse that must fall upon every one that does not keep it. After having concluded his remarks, he presented to me and each of the other servants, a Bible, observing, that he had a number for distribution to those who were willing to receive the word of life—and that in each of the books he had given us, he had turned down leaves, and marked passages that related to the subject of which he had been speaking—and would show he had been declaring to us the word of God. He hoped before we slept we would look over those passages, and seriously consider how we stood in relation to God—how it would be with us, if, before the morning light, we opened our eyes in eternity. When he put the sacred volume into my hands, he said,

“‘Mary, you will here read of a Mary who chose that *better part* which could not be taken from her. May God lead *you* to choose that part. Be well assured that this book is *your best friend*. It will teach you how to live, and how to die. Your eternity hangs upon the counsels it contains.’

“With these words, he kneeled down to offer up the devotions of the family; and among those for whom he petitioned the rich communications of divine grace, were the persons who had just been furnished with a copy of the word of life. I was deeply affected. I immediately retired to my room, and read the passages marked in my Bible. A new discovery was opened to my mind. In this mirror of divine truth, I saw myself in an entire new light. I had ever before thought myself very good, and entitled to great consideration and regard. I now saw that I was the vilest of sinners. I had broken every law of God, if not in act, yet in thought and intent. There appeared to me to be no way of escape. The wrath of an offended God seemed to kindle upon every page I read. I went to bed, but found there was no rest, no peace for me—I never closed my eyes during that whole night. The terrors of judgment and the indescribable horrors of a burning hell seemed to

The workings of an awakened but unregenerate soul.

rise continually before me. I left my bed in the morning exhausted by intense feeling, and filled with dejection and despair. Still I was too proud to allow any one to know how my mind had been agitated: and during the day I tried to throw off my serious feelings, and convince myself that it was all delusion. I resolved that I would not again be present at family prayers, and accordingly the next evening feigned headache, as an excuse to retire before the hour of devotion. But these expedients did not relieve my conscience from that burden of guilt which seemed bound to it as with cords. I still saw, still felt, that I had broken the law of God, and was under sentence of death. The Scriptures I had read, and the solemn words I had heard from Mr. I——, seemed to dwell upon my mind, as though they had been written there in letters of fire. I tried to forget them. I thought of the scenes of pleasure through which I had passed, and thus strove to beguile my thoughts into another train. But the remembrance of those scenes no longer delighted me. They now appeared full of sin, and covered with guilt. I tried to sleep, but it was all in vain. The one all-absorbing thought was still in my mind, *I am a sinner against God, and my feet are going down to the chambers of death.* The course I had taken this very evening now appeared to me awfully wicked. I had been trying to flee from the Holy Spirit. I had resorted to prevarication, that I might avoid being present at that family altar where God first met me. The thought flashed upon my mind, that by this last act of rebellion I had ruined my soul for ever.

“ I lay and thought of these things, till my mind became wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement. The most horrid images seemed to glide before me, and I felt every instant as if I was making the dreadful plunge into the burning abyss. My mind continued in this state for a number of days, and during this period, I, at times, fully believed that I should not live another hour. My health became seriously affected, and I was obliged to take to my bed.

The way of salvation.

“I at length resolved to seek counsel of the Rev. Mr. I——, and to tell him of the misery into which he had plunged me. O! I shall never forget the interest that lit up his countenance when I made this communication. I concluded with telling him, that I felt confident there was no hope for me; that I had sinned beyond the reach of mercy. In the most kind and affectionate manner he replied, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* He then opened to my view the plan of salvation through infinite grace. He read to me a number of passages from the Bible like this—*For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* O! they were sweet passages, and while he read them, my burdened heart seemed to grow lighter. The way of salvation of which he spoke seemed entirely new. It appeared every way lovely, and exactly suited to my case. I felt that it was just what I needed. And I know not how it was, but before he had done speaking, a peace that passeth all understanding had gently and imperceptibly come over my soul, and my fears and griefs were wellnigh gone. Being left alone, I began to think more deeply upon what I had heard. The more I reflected, the more I was struck with the beauty, excellence, and loveliness of this new way of salvation. It seemed so simple, so easy, so sweet to rest my naked soul upon the merits of a crucified Redeemer—to commit myself into his hands, and depend upon his grace to enlighten my understanding, sanctify my heart, and guide my feet in the way of his commandments. I wondered that I had never before understood it. My Bible now became my constant companion, and I began to perceive the truth of Mr. I——’s remark—that ‘*it was my best friend.*’ When betrayed into passion, or neglect of duty, its heavenly precepts taught me to repent, and cast myself afresh upon the tender mercies of a covenant-keeping God. When suffering ill treatment from others, my Bible told me of *a more excellent way*, than to

The influence of divine grace.

return railing for railing. And I soon found that I was much happier when I restrained my feelings, than when I gave vent to them. From my Bible I learnt the misery of ignorance, the worth of time, and the sinfulness of an indolent life. I had no sooner begun to reduce to practice what I had learnt, than I found my advantage in it. By rising early, and employing my leisure hours in reading, I found I was much happier. Every thing seemed to go on better through the whole day. The family appeared better suited, and inclined to be more indulgent. God has greatly blessed me in lifting up the light of his countenance upon me. I have lived to see Mr. and Mrs. Wilson both brought into the Redeemer's fold. I feel that we belong to the same family. I am happy in their service. Nothing would tempt me to leave them. I feel a delightful assurance that neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, will ever separate us from each other, or from the love of Christ."

CHAPTER III.

THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF A CHRISTIAN TEMPER.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Gospel according to St. John.

THE consistent and affecting account that Mary had given of the manner in which she had been led to walk in the ways of religion, deeply interested my feelings, and continued to dwell on my mind with such vivid impression that I could not refrain from alluding to it in the hearing of Mr. Wilson. He appeared much affected, and after a few moments' silence, remarked,

"Mary has not told you all ; I will finish the narrative. When I returned, after the absence to which she referred, I found that things in my house had undergone a great change. Mrs. W—— appeared evidently altered. I had always respected Christianity, and considered it valuable chiefly as inculcating a system of pure and exalted morality. I knew that my wife possessed, in an eminent and distinguished degree, all the moral virtues which adorn domestic and social life. When, therefore, upon my return, I was congratulated by the Rev. Mr. I—— upon the change that had occurred in the religious views and feelings of Mrs. W——, I was indignant, and hastily replied,

" 'What change ? Why, sir, you are dreaming ! Harriet has always been pious. She can be no better than she has been from the first day I knew her. She has ever been as pure as an angel. She is innocence itself.'

" 'Far be it from me,' answered the discreet and prudent

Mr. I——, ‘to disparage, in the least, the stainless character of your lovely wife. But, sir, in the eye of infinite holiness, the purest of our race are so defiled with guilt, that, agreeably to the decision of God himself, nothing can wash out those crimson stains, save the blood of his own and only begotten Son.’

“This was a language which, at that time, I did not understand. I was sensible that a great change had taken place in the kitchen. Things went on there much more systematically, and with greater effect. Mary had evidently become more sedate, industrious, and strictly attentive to the duties of her station.

“A short time after my return, having an appointment of considerable importance at eight o’clock in the morning, I ordered Mary to rap at my door precisely at seven, and have the breakfast on the table by the time I could get down. Accordingly, the next morning, when she knocked at my door, I instantly sprang out of bed, and looked at my watch. It wanted only a quarter of eight. Having hastily dressed myself, I ran down in a great passion, and found Mary waiting with the breakfast. Highly irritated, I said, ‘You are a worthless baggage, and deserve the Penitentiary, for having so shamefully neglected my orders. It is at this moment all of eight o’clock.’

“In a meek and respectful manner she replied, ‘I believe, Mr. Wilson, you are mistaken. The clock wanted ten minutes of seven when I knocked at your door; I was up at five.’

“‘Do you pretend to contradict me,’ said I, in a rage; ‘and to cloak over your neglect and laziness, with a lie? I thought you professed to have become very pious, but I see through all your hypocritical pretensions.’

“Upon this I rushed out of the room, leaving the breakfast untouched. All this time Mary stood with much sorrow depicted on her countenance, but without the least appearance of resentment or irritation. As I passed through the hall, the clock struck seven. I looked up, and

The reparation a Christian makes.

saw the hands indicated the hour the bell announced. When in the street I looked at my watch—it was precisely where it was when I got out of bed. Raising it to my ear, I soon perceived that it must have stopped the evening before. I was too proud to go back for my breakfast, although I had ample time. I was too proud to do an act of justice to a servant whom I had injured. At dinner I was surprised to find Mary just as cheerful and respectful in her attention to me, as though nothing of an unpleasant nature had occurred. This rather provoked me, and I therefore resolved to try her temper. I seized upon every opportunity to irritate her. For a while she endured every indignity with becoming and truly Christian forbearance; but at length her natural temper got the ascendancy over her principles, and for a moment she spoke like the unregenerate Mary Maywood, in language full of irritation and violence. My object was now attained, and I thought no more of it. But in a few hours, Mary came into my room, and with a countenance expressive of the deepest emotions of sorrow and distress, said,

“‘Sir, I have come to ask you to pardon the rash and improper expressions I used to you this morning. I know my conduct was wholly unjustifiable. I have nothing to say in vindication of myself only, that I am a poor, weak, sinful creature.’

“‘This was so unexpected, and to me so unaccountable, that it completely unmanned me. I involuntarily burst into tears, and wept like a child. The guilt and iniquity of my past conduct rushed upon my mind, and stood before me, revealed in a new and horrible light. I had been trying for weeks to wound the feelings and disturb the peace of a quiet and faithful domestic; and yet all this time she had not shown the slightest symptom of resentment. But when at length, through the provocations that I had wantonly thrown in her way, she had been betrayed into a momentary exhibition of ill temper, she immediately had come with tears, and every mark of sorrow and humi-

The change of mind wrought in Mr. Wilson.

lity, to beg my forgiveness. This appeared wonderful to me, and I could not but ask by what expedient she had been enabled to maintain such control over herself so long?

“ ‘By looking in my Bible,’ said she, ‘at the example, and endeavouring to follow the steps, of Him, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*’

“ She left the room. But this incident had aroused a train of reflections, that continued to course through my mind, to the exclusion of every other thought. My conscience had been touched by the finger of God. The course I had pursued in reference to Mary now appeared awfully wicked. I began to review my past life—to consider the principles upon which I had hitherto acted. I opened the long neglected word of God. My mind soon became thronged with convictions of sin and guilt, which took sleep from my eyes, and removed peace far off. I in vain sought, amid the engagements of business, and the gayeties of fashionable life, rest within. I never found it, until I found it in that blood of atonement which cleanseth from all sin. I am confident, that to the latest period of my existence, I shall regard Mary Maywood as the honoured instrument, under God, by which I was brought to a sense of my duty. Her conduct, from that time to the present, has been a pattern to all servants. Although we have felt toward her the greatest affection, and treated her with the utmost tenderness, yet has she never in the slightest instance taken advantage of this kind treatment, but uniformly, and with true Christian principle, walked in that humble and subordinate path which comports with her station. Yes, she is a pattern for all servants. She rises with the dawn, and thus redeems the time, having abundant leisure to read her Bible, and hold intercourse with her God, while others are in their beds. She is never idle, but seems to bear continually in mind that she is a steward, and that her time is one of those sacred trusts for which she will have to

The true interest of servants.

render an account. Her great anxiety seems to be to make herself useful. She is ever attentive to the directions she receives, so that she never needs telling the second time. She is strictly conscientious, and from principle, carefully avoids waste or extravagance in the use of any article intrusted to her, ever making our interest her own. Her whole history presents a most striking instance of the divine efficacy and transforming power of the religion of Jesus. And if servants understood their real interests, they would *seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*, and then from happy experience they would find, as Mary did, *all other things added thereunto.*"

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S END.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

From the 23d Psalm.

SEVERAL years had now elapsed, and I had passed through a variety of scenes in a distant part of the country. Still this narrative was as fresh in my memory as though I had heard it but yesterday. The events contained in it were such a practical illustration of the moral power of the Bible to transform the human character, and qualify man for all the duties of life, that I continued to turn to them with increased delight, and with new conviction of the divine source whence the Bible came. Business at length rendered it necessary that I should again visit the place in which the Wilson family resided. I immediately sought out my old friends, and, as formerly, met with a very cordial reception. It was just before the breakfast was brought on the table, that I called. Not seeing Mary in attendance, I made some inquiry in relation to her. No sooner had I mentioned her name, than I perceived a train of melancholy ideas had been started.

"O!" said Mrs. Wilson, "Mary is near her rest."

Mr. Wilson could not refrain from raising his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Mary," said he, in a tone of voice indicating deep feeling, "a few months since caught a violent cold, and has gone into a hasty consumption. She is now on the

Ride into the country.

very confines of the eternal world. We desired her to remain with us. But her mother, an aged and infirm woman, lives a few miles out of town, and Mary, hoping that her sickness and death might be blessed to the salvation of her mother, wished to go and die under her roof. We visit her almost every day. If it will afford you any satisfaction, I will accompany you to her residence this afternoon."

To this proposition I most cheerfully acceded. It was in autumn. The frost had already changed the colour of the foliage, and given to the forest a thousand varied hues. The whole country, through which our road lay, seemed to wear a sober and solemn aspect. The falling and fallen leaves with which our path was frequently strewn, appeared to furnish a striking memento of the slight tenure by which we hold life. Our minds were thus prepared for the scene we were to witness in the humble cottage which we were approaching. This rural habitation had recently been fitted up at the expense of Mr. Wilson, and both in its exterior and interior, bore the aspect of comfort and neatness. It stood in a retired spot, and all nature seemed to repose around it with the stillness and serenity of a Sabbath scene. As we entered, we found objects of no less interest within, than we had been witnessing without. Mary was reclining upon her bed in a half sitting posture, supported by pillows. I was struck with her wan and altered looks. The ravages of disease had wrought a great change in her appearance. A gleam of joy kindled in her hollow and sunken eye, and a new animation spread over her features as we approached her, and stretching out her hand, she feebly said,

"Praised be my covenant-keeping God for all his mercies to me. And great thanks are due to you, my kind friends, for having taken the pains to visit one so unworthy of your attention."

I sat down by her bedside in silence. My heart was too full to speak. At length I remarked,

The power of the Bible.

“Mary, it is a long time since I have seen you—but I have often thought of you as one in whom God had displayed the riches of his grace. I trust that you now feel the sustaining power of that grace which has shone forth so conspicuously in your life.”

“O yes,” she replied, with increased animation and earnestness, “my confidence in my Saviour is unshaken. Since lying upon this bed of sickness I have received many tokens of his love. The divine promises now appear doubly precious to me. My Bible”—and here she placed her hand upon the sacred volume which lay by her side—the very volume she had received from the Rev. Mr. I—— on the evening that her mind was first brought under conviction of sin, “my Bible, what a comfort it has been to me in this sickness! When I received this book I was told that I should find it *my best friend*. I have found it so through life. And I now find it a no less faithful guide to me in the hour of death. When depressed with the remembrance of my imperfections and neglects of duty—of the sins that checker the whole course of my earthly pilgrimage, this points me to the cross, and bids me cast all my cares upon Jesus. When I look with trembling at the approaching struggle, when my soul shall take its final leave of this poor body—when I turn my eye to the darkness of the grave, to the shadows and dimness that rest upon an untried eternity, and am full of fear—my Bible bids me look to Jesus, ‘the author and finisher of my faith,’ ‘the captain of my salvation,’ who, through grace, will enable me to come off more than conqueror. When I look forward to a judgment bar, and my soul begins to shrink away in terror, my Bible spreads before me these precious truths—‘*If God be for us, who can be against us. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that*

The advantages of true piety.

died—yea, rather, that is risen again ; who is even at the right hand of God—who also maketh intercession for us.’

“When I remember these precious declarations, I am constrained to exclaim,—*I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

“O ! sir, I wish that all could know the worth of the Bible, and especially servants ? What would be my situation this moment, just ready to enter the eternal world, without the hopes it imparts ? It makes us useful and happy in life, and gives us peace at the last. Servants above all others need the instruction of the Bible. It teaches them to be faithful, honest, contented, careful about the interests of their employers, and moderate in their own expenses.”

During these remarks she was frequently interrupted by violent turns of coughing, which greatly exhausted her strength. She then faintly added,

“Godliness is great gain for this world : had not divine grace arrested my steps, I should at this time have been dying amid rags and wretchedness ; now I have every comfort, and have laid up several hundred dollars, which will go to support my poor old mother when I sleep in the dust.”

Here her mother, full of age and decrepitude, came forward. Tears gushed down her withered cheeks, as she kneeled by the bedside, and seized the hand of her daughter.

“I shall want little,” said she, in a voice almost stifled with grief—“I shall want little after you are gone. My old bones will soon be laid in the earth. I shall soon follow you.”

“Mother,” said Mary, with much feeling, “I hope you will follow me to the presence of Christ, and that through infinite grace, we shall both be permitted to enter his kingdom.”

The closing scene.

“ Ah! my dear child !” said the aged and agitated mother, “ your letters, and Bible, and sickness, first led me to think of these things. After I had forgotten the Lord all my days, until I was old, and gray-headed, he still hath had mercy upon me, and brought my soul out of darkness. It is of his infinite mercy that I am not now in perdition.”

Deeply affected with the conversation we had heard, and the scene we had witnessed, we took our leave, not, however, until we had kneeled down by the bed of this dying saint, and lifted up our hearts in prayer. The serenity of triumphant faith rested upon the countenance of Mary Maywood at our parting. Before the next morning she was in the bosom of her God.

As we left this humble dwelling and commenced our return, the shades of evening had begun to gather around us, and for a while we rode on silently, musing upon the scene from which we had just retired. I could not but think, how unimportant to all purposes of real happiness are the temporary allotments of men in this world. The main thing, after all, is to be so situated in life, that the grace of God will come to us, and the events of his providence lead us to walk in wisdom's ways. When I thought of Mary's history, and of the crown of unfading glory that was soon to be placed upon her head, I could not but think of how little consequence it was whether we were masters or servants during our short stay on the earth ! I could not but think how well it was, that we were just in the station and situation in life in which God had placed us ! How delightful to my mind was the thought that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth ! And then, too, what an eulogium had I heard upon the Bible ! My faith was strengthened, and my hope and trust in God increased.

Reader, if thou wouldst live esteemed, and die as happy as did the subject of the preceding narrative, then like her,

Concluding reflection.

view the Bible as *thy best friend*, study its holy precepts, cherish its heavenly hopes, and seek to exemplify in thy conduct, and experience in thy heart, its purifying, its saving influence.

A FAMILY IN ETERNITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE VILLAGE BURIAL GROUND.

“ Like crowded forest trees we stand,
And some are mark'd to fall ;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all.
Green as the bay tree, ever green,
With its new foliage on,
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen ;
I pass'd—and they were gone.
Read, ye that run, the awful truth
With which I charge my page,
A worm is in the bud of youth,
And at the root of age.”

COWPER.

ON a recent tour through one of the Northern States, I stopped at a village situated on a creek, which afforded numerous and extensive advantages and facilities for manufacturing purposes. There was nothing in the immediately surrounding scenery particularly calculated to interest a traveller. The whole aspect of the country as far as the eye could roam was rough and broken, and yet withal so tame and uniform, that one soon grew weary in looking at it. In like manner, the village itself presented nothing to the eye of a stranger particularly striking or attractive. In the construction of its buildings, the laying out of its streets,

The change which time produces.

and all its various arrangements, convenience and economy had most manifestly been consulted rather than taste or elegance. To the ordinary traveller, therefore, there was nothing connected with this place calculated to inspire him with a wish to linger in its neighbourhood. But I had spent several years of my childhood there, and the sight of this village, as I approached it, awakened feelings of a peculiar character, and essentially different from those which would have been awakened in the bosom of a stranger.

Many years had elapsed since my last visit to this place. Its general aspect had undergone very little change, but I soon perceived that its inhabitants were to me an almost entire new race of beings.

Having stopped at one of the public inns, I immediately went to visit several spots which were once familiar to me, and with which were associated the fond remembrance of other days, and of scenes for ever past. As I leisurely strolled through the village, there was one thing that struck me very painfully. I could see no names on the signs, and but few faces in the street, that I had ever before known. To all whom I met I was a stranger, and no one appeared to recognise me. At length it occurred to me, that there was one habitation where I should probably find a number of my old acquaintances—"the house appointed for all living." Thither, therefore, I directed my steps.

I have often thought it a fit and becoming expression of our regard for our deceased friends, to see that the place of their interment is guarded from the profane intrusion of the thoughtless, and the unhallowed tread of brute beasts. Great attention had been paid to this by the former inhabitants of this village. The burial ground was a short distance from the village, in a secluded and rural spot. It was in the form of an oblong square, and protected by a strong enclosure. On each side of the square various kinds of trees were planted, and especially those which have long been regarded as peculiarly appropriate to shade the ashes

Reflections in the graveyard.

of the departed. The avenue which led from the highway to this resting place of the dead was studded on either side with a row of weeping willows, which hung their drooping branches so mournfully over the head of him who passed beneath, that no one could reach the place of interment without feeling that he was treading on holy ground.

As I walked up this avenue and entered that sacred area, where, in former years, I had so often heard the solemn sound of "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust" borne on the air; and where I had beheld weeping mourners gather in silence around the newly excavated grave, to see the last remains of some dear friend let down into its dark and solitary abode, I could not but stop, and gaze in pensive meditation upon the "heaped hillocks" of earth that lay thick around me. "How populous," thought I, "this 'subterranean city!' How sure its annual increase of inhabitants! Notwithstanding the living seek through monumental stones to keep up and perpetuate the distinctions which existed in life, yet, in truth and reality, how are they all lost in the grave! The beggar and the rich man lie equally low, and the worm feeds alike sweetly upon them. The several paths of that busy multitude that are moving in so many directions through yonder streets, will all terminate here. O, if this thought could be ever fresh in their minds, how would it abate the ardour with which they pursue the perishing vanities of time! How would it dissipate worldly mindedness, moderate the love of pleasure, and make sensuality itself tremble amid its guilty indulgencies!"

As I passed along from grave to grave, the names that I read upon the stones called up the images of a numerous group that I had once known. A plain marble slab that lay near me apprized me that I was treading over the ashes of one whose countenance and character I recollected very distinctly. He was a small thin man, and well known to all the village. Professionally he was an apothecary, and for many long years had he dealt out medicine to heal the

The grave of the apothecary.

The beautiful female.

The trifler.

sickness of others. Though thin and sallow, he had been so long at his post, and was by night and by day surrounded by so many powerful agents to ward off disease, that many supposed that he had discovered the true elixir of life, and could bid defiance to the shafts of mortality. What a commentary did that stone read to me upon the vanity of all such expectations ! His medicine availed nothing when God remanded the dust, out of which he had been formed, to its native inanimate state.

A little farther, and I read upon a splendid monument—the name of one who, in early life, had figured largely in the gay world. Beauty of person, and elegance of manners, joined with uncommon brilliancy of intellect, made her an object of universal attraction. One of the wealthiest young men in the country succeeded in gaining her hand. They lived in great splendour, and for a while their path seemed strewn with flowers ; but soon some hidden source of sorrow stole the colour from her cheek, and spread a shade of gloom over her once bright countenance. Common report declared that the cause of her unrevealed trouble was conjugal infidelity on the part of him who had won and wed her. Whatever that cause was, it drove her to the foot of the cross for blessedness, and in Jesus Christ she found a faithful and unfailing friend. Many years had passed away since I had heard her name pronounced, and when I read it on that proud monument, I could not but exclaim, “ How valueless and unmeaning does all this sculptured marble that covers thy poor dust appear to thee now ! And if, through infinite mercy, thou art among the blood-washed throng around the throne, how loud are thy praises to the Eternal, for that bitter drug mixed in the cup of thy earthly happiness, which made the pleasures of the world pall on thy taste, and led thee to the well of salvation in quest of the waters of life ! ”

Upon another stone, I read a name that made me feel more solemn than I had before since I entered within these precincts of the dead. That name was Harry C——. He

The grave of an aged saint.

The Lindsley family.

had been all his life a ceaseless trifler. Possessing naturally great humour, and a talent for keen, sarcastic repartee, he cultivated and cherished this propensity, to the neglect of every thing sober and serious. He could not go to the house of God, nor even to a funeral, without finding something to make all around him laugh. But now, there he lay before me in the silence of the grave! His laugh was over—his jokes were done—the worm was feeding on his dissolved frame, and his soul was in a world where all was sober and serious reality.

As I walked onward a little farther, I found myself standing over the grave of one whose venerable form and silver locks I had often seen in the house of God. This aged saint was a living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. While gazing upon the spot where his mouldered ashes reposed, and lifting up my thoughts to the glorious rest upon which he had entered, I could not but say, "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*" Having at length reached a distant corner of the burial ground, I read on four stones that were ranged close to each other,—

"*Frederick Lindsley, Esq., who departed this life in the 43d year of his age.*"

"*Mary, relict of Frederick Lindstey, Esq., who 'fell asleep in Christ' in the 37th year of her age.*"

"*Hezekiah, son of Frederick and Mary Lindsley, who died in the eighth year of his age.*"

"*Mary Anna Lindsley, who died in May, &c. in the 18th year of her age—much beloved in life, lamented in death; her memory will be long cherished on earth—her many excellencies can be fully known only in heaven.*"

"Ah," said I to myself, as I read these names with a throbbing heart, "then they are all gone—they are now A FAMILY IN ETERNITY—I shall meet them no more till I meet them there."

I had known this family intimately, and spent many happy hours in their society. Their history was one truly

The Lindsley family without religion.

eventful ; replete with reverses, and furnishing many instructive lessons to those who ponder the ways of God and consider the operation of his hands.

Mr. Lindsley was a lawyer, and had, at an early age, acquired not only eminence in his profession, but in a distinguished degree the confidence of the community in which he resided. This confidence had been inspired, not only by his accurate and extensive legal knowledge, but by his great integrity of character and uprightness of conduct.

He was particularly blessed and happy in his family. Mrs. Lindsley, the partner of his bosom, added to polished manners and a well balanced mind, great amiability and sweetness of temper. She was the mother of two interesting children. The oldest was a daughter, who, at the time that our narrative commences, was about twelve years of age. Mary Anna bore an exact resemblance to her mother in all the delicate touches and interesting features of her character.

Mr. Lindsley, among his many other excellencies, was distinguished for his kindness and great hospitality. In him the poor and the fatherless found a friend, "the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him," and often he "caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

His wife and children he almost idolized. Where their comfort or happiness was concerned, he spared no expense, shrunk from no sacrifices. His home was a little paradise, where all hearts seemed bound together by the rosied wreath of love. All who visited his house went away with the full impression, that if there was a happy family on earth, it was Mr. Lindsley's.

This family, however, lacked one essential element of happiness. Their hearts had not been renewed and purified by the power of the Holy Ghost. While, therefore, this great change was unwrought in them—while they neglected this "principal thing"—their happiness was built upon a foundation as uncertain and unstable as the sand. An event which occurred about this time revealed to them

Change in religious views.

this truth, and turned their thoughts toward the solemn realities of the eternal world. They had, previous to this, been constant attendants upon public worship, but now they began to feel that something more than a mere outward respect for religion was necessary. The circumstances here referred to will be explained in the next chapter.

The goodness of God does not always lead to repentance.

CHAPTER II.

MR. LINDSLEY'S FAMILY.

“Afflictions from above,
Are angels sent
On embassies of love.”

MERRY.

THE unnumbered blessings which a kind Providence spreads around us, and the manifold tokens of divine regard which we daily receive, were, one would think, sufficient to melt our hearts into gratitude, and win us to the service of God. But long experience has shown, that men are usually never more unmindful of their Creator than when they are feasting upon his richest bounties, and their sky is irradiated by the brightest rays of his mercy. Affliction, with dark and terrific form, must cross our path, blighting the fondest hopes, and desolating the fairest prospects, before we can be recalled to a sense of our duty. And happy is it, if the blighting of earthly hopes and the bitter pangs of earthly bereavement lead us to fly to the bosom of God, and to seek shelter beneath the outspread wings of covenanted mercy.

The voice of sorrow and mourning was now heard in the dwelling of Mr. Lindsley. His only son, a lad about eight years old, had fallen from a neighbouring hayloft, and was taken up dead. Mr. Lindsley was absent on business when this melancholy event occurred. As soon as the intelligence reached him, he instantly hastened home.

“Never shall I forget,” said one who was present on that occasion, and from whom I have derived several important facts in this hasty sketch—“never shall I forget

The religious impressions of Mrs. Lindsley.

Mr. L——'s expression and attitude, as he entered the room, and approached the corpse of his child. His hands were clenched, every feature of his countenance was wrought up into an expression of agony, and his whole frame shook with emotion. He stood and gazed for a moment upon the sweet and motionless face of his boy, and then, as if he could no longer restrain himself, rushed from the room to give vent in private to his feelings."

After the funeral had passed, and the first excess of grief had subsided, this family were visited by the minister of the place, and kindly but faithfully reminded, that the bereavement which they had sustained was a solemn admonition from God, urging them to enter upon the business of their everlasting salvation. His words were listened to with seriousness and attention.

A change from this time was discoverable in both Mr. and Mrs. Lindsley. The Spirit of God seemed to have touched their hearts.

I know not whether Mrs. Lindsley was more deeply impressed than her husband, but she certainly cherished more sacredly her serious impressions, and sought the Lord with an anxious earnestness that abated not, till she felt emboldened to lay hold on the divine promises, and claim Jesus as *her* Saviour. From the hour the light of God's reconciled countenance began to dawn upon her troubled mind, the cross of Christ became endeared to her. She then learned the meaning of that declaration—"unto you who believe he is precious." Christ was precious to her soul. Her great desire was to follow him and do his will. She wished to make an entire surrender of herself into his hands. Her daily inquiry before the mercy-seat was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" She soon discovered, from reading the New Testament, that it was her duty to confess Christ before men. She was struck particularly with these passages. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "Go ye into all the

The obligations to receive baptism.

world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is *baptized*, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "And when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." "Peter said unto them, Repent, and *be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then they that gladly received his word were *baptized*." These, and similar passages, convinced her that baptism was an ordinance enjoined by the word of God. She needed no argument to persuade her to do what she plainly saw was the requirement of holy Scripture. She had not been baptized in infancy, and she therefore determined, in obedience to the command of that Saviour, to whose free and unmerited grace alone she looked for mercy, to make a public acknowledgment of him in the holy sacrament of baptism.

Having come to this determination, she sought a fit opportunity to communicate her intention to Mr. Lindsley. About three months had now elapsed since the death of their son. Mrs. Lindsley and her daughter were one day sitting together alone, when Mr. Lindsley came in, and sat for a while silent and apparently in deep thought.

"I have been thinking," at length said Mrs. Lindsley, addressing herself to her husband, "I have been thinking for some days to speak to you upon a subject that lies very near my heart. In the death of our dear son, we have had a most striking proof of the emptiness and instability of all that this earth can give. I feel that I have need of a divine Comforter. I wish to seek him in the way of his appointment. I wish to cast myself at the feet of Jesus, and ask him to wash me in 'the fountain that has been opened for sin and uncleanness.' I wish to be baptized."

Mr. Lindsley was deeply affected by these remarks. The veins in his forehead became distended, and upon every feature were visible the workings of a troubled soul.

Mr. Lindsley.Mary Anna.

The tear glistened in his eye, and his lips quivered with emotion. For some time he could not speak. At length he said,

“Wait, my dear, a few weeks, and perhaps I shall feel authorized to accompany you to the baptismal font, for I have never been baptized.” He could say no more. He arose and left the room.

There is no doubt but that Mr. Lindsley was at this time under deep serious impressions, and that he had formed secret resolutions to enter upon the work of his salvation. Mrs. Lindsley followed the retiring steps of her husband, as he left the room, with a streaming eye, offering up to the Divine Being the earnest petition, that the Holy Spirit might accompany him wherever he went, revealing to him his character as a sinner, and constraining him to fly to the foot of the cross for mercy and life. When she turned her eyes towards Mary Anna, whose presence she had entirely forgotten in the deeply absorbing train of reflection that had been passing through her mind, she saw her bathed in tears. Her first thought was, that this gush of sensibility had been called forth by the deep feeling she had just witnessed in her parents. Mrs. Lindsley, therefore, did not think fit to intimate, by making any inquiry, that she noticed this burst of tenderness in her daughter.

After a little interval Mary Anna was the first to interrupt the silence that ensued, by the following innocent, artless, and affecting train of remarks; and as she spoke, the tears were still glistening in her eyes.

“Mother, I hope dear father will become pious, and be baptized. For I was reading this morning in the gospel of St. John, and it has been sounding in my ears ever since, ‘he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.’ I hope father will be saved; don’t you, mother?”

“Child,” said her mother, her heart ready to burst with emotion, “it is highly proper that you should feel a tender and affectionate solicitude in reference to the eternal salva-

tion of your dear father, but of vastly greater importance that you should feel an anxiety about your own everlasting condition, and learn to ‘remember your Creator in the days of your youth.’ ”

“Dear mother,” said Mary Anna, “how long I have wished to talk with you on this subject! I have been thinking all day what an awful thing it would be, to be damned—to be shut out for ever from heaven, and cast down to that place where, the Bible says, ‘the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched;’ and I sometimes fear that I shall be shut up there, for I am *such a sinner!*”

“How long since you have had these feelings and reflections?” inquired her mother.

“Ever since I can remember,” said she, “at times. But these thoughts have dwelt continually in my mind since last spring. I went out one day to gather wild flowers. As I was wandering around, all at once it occurred to me, how beautiful and lovely are the works of God! The trees had just put on their new foliage—the meadows and pastures were covered with fresh verdure—the violets bloomed all around—the blossoms hung upon the peach trees—every breath of air seemed full of fragrance—the sun shone with all its splendour and brightness over every field, and seemed to tip every flower with new tints of beauty—a thousand little insects were buzzing and dancing through the air—the birds were singing sweetly from every bush and bramble—the lambs were skipping over the hills, or chasing in little troops through the plain—all seemed joyous, and thankful, and glad. A voice seemed to whisper in my ear, ‘Shall all these praise God and you forget him?’ O, how my heart then sunk within me! I sat down and wept. I tried to pray—to bless God; but then I felt that I was so great a sinner—I had forgotten God so long, and loved him so little, that I could not pray. It seemed as if he frowned upon me with a look of wrath. I came home sorrowful. I kept thinking for many weeks about this, and when Hezekiah died I felt as though God designed his death as

Joy and peace in believing.

a warning to me; and there has not been a day from that time to this that I have not thought about dying; and when I have been alone, and thought over all the wrong things I have done, I have often felt as though there was no hope for me. But the other day I was reading in my Bible this passage, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' I had just before been thinking, what an 'intolerable burden' my sins were; and the thought occurred to me, Am I not one of those who are 'labouring and heavy laden?' Am I not one of those to whom the Saviour here says, 'I will give you rest?' In spite of myself I could not but rejoice. It seemed as if I had all at once found Him that would save me. Ever since then I take delight in nothing so much as in reading about Christ. Mother, do you not think that Christ will have mercy upon me? May I not then also be baptized?"

This guileless, unsophisticated, and almost infantile discourse of Mary Anna quite overcame the feelings of her mother. Her heart was too full for utterance. Embracing her daughter, she bathed herself and her child in tears of tenderness and joy.

CHAPTER III.

PROFESSION OF RELIGION.

“Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on.

* * * * *

Who in the strength of Jesus trusts,
Is more than conqueror.
Stand then in his great might,
With all his strength endued,
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.”

WHEN it is recollected that baptism is the sign and seal of the Christian covenant—a covenant entered into between creatures, whose breath is in their nostrils, and that Omnipotent Being who “is from everlasting to everlasting”—that all his mercies are covenanted mercies—that the very idea of a covenant implies the greatest condescension on his part, inasmuch as he thereby binds himself by a promise, assuring those that love and fear him, that though “the mountains depart and the hills be removed, his kindness shall never depart from them, nor the covenant of his peace be removed”—when these several particulars are recollected, it is truly astonishing, that, on the one hand, any who have not repented of their sins, who have not resolved to turn from every evil way, and devote themselves, soul and body, to the service of God, should presume to approach the baptismal font, or seek to be washed in the mystical waters of baptism, as though “the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” not “the answer of a good conscience toward God,” would make them clean in his sight;

and on the other hand, that any who cherish a well-grounded hope that they have been born of the Spirit—and are desirous of receiving some special token of God's loving-kindness, should think lightly of this blessed sacrament, instituted on purpose to initiate them into the family of the Most High.

Mr. Lindsley, for a number of weeks after the conversation related in the last chapter, appeared very thoughtful and serious. He assembled his family, night and morning, and read to them some affecting portion of Scripture. His whole appearance indicated the undoubted fact, that he was under deep convictions of sin, and "almost persuaded to be a Christian."

Mrs. Lindsley was cheering herself from day to day with the hope that the time was not far distant, when herself, her husband, and their only child, would stand before the baptismal font to enter into an everlasting covenant with Jehovah. She did not, however, think it expedient to mention the subject again to her husband, presuming that when his mind was in a fit state he would himself propose it.

Mr. Lindsley was a firm believer in the truth of the Christian religion, and in its vital and practical influence upon the heart and life. He could not have borne the idea of dying without its consolations. He meant to save his soul. But still he did not now feel ready to obey the call of Christ, to give up all and follow him. He stood so connected with men of business, and by his professional duties was so frequently brought in contact with the world, that he feared he could not sustain the Christian character consistently. Such were the evil suggestions of a heart that still clung to the world. Though in most points a man of great decision and fearlessness, Mr. Lindsley was ashamed of the cross, and shrunk from the idea of standing before the world in the avowed character of a religious man.

He soon began to resist the strivings of God's Spirit. He secretly tried a thousand expedients to extract the

Preparation for baptism.

arrows of conviction from his soul. He sought to banish his serious reflections by becoming immersed in professional engagements, and at length his seriousness began gradually to wear off.

Mrs. Lindsley observed this with alarm. It was Sunday morning. She had been long hoping, as the morn of that sacred day week after week returned, that he would announce to her his desire to approach the baptismal font. But she had waited in vain. She determined to wait no longer. She therefore renewed the conversation on the subject of their receiving this holy ordinance.

Mr. Lindsley at first seemed averse to speaking upon the subject. Mary Anna was present, and ventured to make a remark. "Do," said she, "my dear father, resolve to be on the Lord's side. Let us all go together, and give ourselves up to God in baptism."

The sensibility of the father was touched by the solicitude of his child, and he thus replied :

"I do not think that my feelings or character will warrant so solemn a profession on my part, as I must necessarily make in receiving baptism. But do not wait for me. Next to being admitted myself into the fold of Christ's flock, nothing can give me so much pleasure as to know that my wife and child are numbered among the children of God. Appoint next Sunday for the time of receiving that holy ordinance, and perhaps"—a tear started from his eye as he spoke—"perhaps I shall then think differently."

The rubric that precedes the baptismal service in the Episcopal church requires, that in all cases where adult persons are to receive baptism, "timely notice shall be given to the minister, *that so due care may be taken for their examination,*" to ascertain whether they possess the proper qualifications. In conformity to this standing rule, the intention of Mrs. Lindsley and her daughter was signified to the clergyman to whose congregation they were attached, with a request that he would call and allow them to converse with him on the subject. The request was

Christ all our strength.

most cheerfully complied with, and the evidence they gave that they were truly under the influence of divine grace was every way satisfactory.

A part of the conversation that passed between the clergyman and Mary Anna was as follows :

"I am rejoiced," said he, "to see one so young resolving to devote herself to the service of her heavenly Father."

"I fear," was her judicious reply, "I fear I am not too young to be lost if I should die without a Saviour."

"Very true," replied the minister. "But have you duly considered the responsibility that you take upon you by this act? There are many pleasures and gayeties styled in the catechism 'the vanities of the world,' to which young people are usually devoted; these, by your baptismal vow, must be for ever renounced. That vow binds you to all the duties and high responsibilities of a Christian. It was customary in the primitive church for persons, immediately upon receiving baptism, to be presented with a white robe, which they were to wear for a number of days, in token of the purity of life which, by profession, they were bound to exhibit. Remember, my young friend, that you are about to put on a robe that will be soiled by every contact with the world."

"The pleasures of the world," said Mary Anna, "I can renounce without regret; but I am sensible of my own weakness. To keep that white robe unstained is, I am persuaded, utterly beyond my power. But may I not hope, that if I give myself up to Christ, soul, body, and spirit, and look to him continually for guidance and support, I shall be kept by *his* power, and that his strength will be made perfect in my weakness?"

"Indeed you may, my child," replied the pastor, deeply affected by the degree of spiritual knowledge which one so young evinced. "This is the true secret of all our strength. For though St. Paul declared that he had no sufficiency in himself, yet when he looked to the all-sufficient Saviour,

The feelings with which Mrs. Lindsley approached the baptismal font.

he immediately added, 'I can do all things *through Christ*, which strengtheneth me.' "

It was hoped by Mrs. Lindsley that her husband would have been present at this interview. But he evidently sought to avoid it, and was accordingly absent at the time.

The next Sunday arrived. The afternoon of that day had been appointed as the time of receiving that long anticipated rite which was to engraft Mrs. Lindsley and her daughter into the visible body of Christ. But when she rose from her seat to go forward to receive that holy rite, her frame trembled, her step was unsteady, a deathlike paleness came over her countenance, and her heart was weighed down with sorrow. It was not that she went *reluctantly* to dedicate herself to the service of her Saviour, but that she went *unaccompanied by him whose happiness and salvation were as dear to her as her own*—that she went thus wrapped in a cloud. The thought at that moment crossed her mind, that they might finally and everlastingly be separated. It was that dreadful and agonizing thought that shook her frame with trembling, rendered her step unsteady, spread paleness over her features, and pressed her down with a load of sorrow.

When Mrs. Lindsley and her daughter came forward and stood before the chancel, many eyes in the congregation were turned towards Mr. Lindsley's pew,—a disappointment being evidently felt, in not seeing him by the side of his wife and daughter; but his pew was empty. This struck every one as singular, inasmuch as Mr. L— was seldom absent from church; and the thought very naturally occurred, that he would feel a peculiar interest in being present on such an occasion.

The ceremony proceeded. The meek, humble, and subdued appearance of the mother and her daughter—the tender, affecting, and solemn language of the service, made a deep impression upon the congregation. The ordinance, as there is every reason to believe, was made the channel

The trying test.

of rich consolation and much spiritual strength to the recipients themselves.

We are now coming to a period in their history, when the reality of their principles was to be put to the test, and all the sustaining influence of divine grace, of which they were partakers, was needed to uphold them.

The sad decline.

CHAPTER IV.

FATAL DERELICTION.

And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.

Epistle to the Romans.

ABOUT four years had now elapsed since the occurrence of the events related in the last chapter. And in reference to those sweet scenes of domestic happiness which formerly gladdened the dwelling of Mr. Lindsley, it might well be said, "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"

From the Sunday that his wife and daughter received baptism, his views and feelings seemed totally changed. The effort which he made to withstand the strong wrestlings of the Spirit, that then urged him to a surrender of himself to the service of his Saviour, seemed to burst at once from around him all those bands of religion which parental instruction had at first imposed, and which the belief of years had been strengthening. His respect for divine things was evidently diminished. His trouble of soul was gone. He entered upon the theatre, and took an active part in the scenes, of political life. In the contest and collisions in which he was engaged, and the measures which he thought necessary to adopt to carry his plans, he began to contract habits of dissipation. His business was neglected. A frown, which never before had darkened the sunshine of his home, was now frequently seen on his brow in the midst of his family. Things continued to wax worse and worse; and at the time to which our narrative now refers, Mr. Lindsley seemed to have reached a point

Intemperance.

Infidelity.

in the road of iniquity, from which there was little prospect of return. His once manly and intelligent countenance now bore the red and bloated aspect of intemperance. His business had left him. The most of his property was gone. He spent the greater part of his time in idleness—lounging in bar-rooms, and making merry with a set of companions, who, like himself, had made shipwreck of their character and fortune.

He no longer visited the sanctuary of God. The truths that he there heard troubled him. He no longer read the Bible, for condemnation flashed upon him from its every page.

At this time there was in this village an organized club of skeptics, who styled their body “The Church of Reason.” This club was made up of the most profane and profligate in the community—of persons of the most abandoned lives. One common feeling had drawn them together—a desire to find in infidelity, or atheism, or in some other “refuge of lies,” a system of belief that would allow them to remain at ease in the gratification of their lusts, and in the indulgence of their favourite sins.

Such was this “Church of Reason.” They convened regularly on the Lord’s day. Their chief business was to drink to intoxication, to sing songs, to ridicule the Scriptures, and defame religion. With this club Mr. Lindsley connected himself, and in time became its leader and head.

He was no longer the kind and affectionate husband. An utter depravation of moral sentiment seemed to have been wrought in him. In all those points in which his character formerly appeared most amiable, there was now exhibited the most appalling features of fiend-like depravity. That wife whom he had cherished with so much tenderness and love; that daughter whom he had nurtured with so much parental care and kindness, he now seemed perfectly to hate. He took every occasion to wound and mortify their feelings in the presence of company, by uttering the grossest indelicacies and the most heaven-daring

The profligate husband and hardened father.

profanity. He employed every art and expedient that malevolence could devise, to thwart and disturb them in their religious enjoyments. He sought every opportunity to denounce in their hearing, the Bible, religion, and the ministers of religion; and to load them with every vile epithet found in the vocabulary of vulgarity and profaneness.

All this was borne by his amiable wife and daughter with unparalleled meekness and patience. Not one repining or reproachful word was uttered. They had learned in the school of Christ to exercise that "charity which suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things." And daily did they kneel down together before the throne of God, and put up their joint petitions—the one for a profligate husband, and the other for a hardened father.

This meek and patient endurance of evil did not soften, but seemed to exasperate the feelings of Mr. Lindsley. Conscious that he had injured, irreparably injured, the beings who of all others loved him most, he was bent upon provoking them to some act of rashness, that he might seize upon *it* as a sort of an apology to himself for his conduct. Defeated in this object, he became still more and more desperate. Temporal misfortunes began to thicken around him. Deeply in debt—destitute of credit—having no funds that he could control—he at times awoke to the full perception of the horrors of his situation. And at such times, all these calamities were most irrationally and unjustly charged upon his family. His treatment to them at length became so abusive and alarming, that it was deemed necessary for their personal safety to flee their home, and seek shelter and protection under another roof.

One instance, selected from many others of a similar character, will serve to illustrate this remark.

Mrs. Lindsley, naturally of a frail constitution, was now, from the accumulating weight of domestic grief which hung upon her heart, in a wretched state of health. Her pale features, occasionally flushed with an hectic glow, bore

The sorrowful wife.

evident marks that a worm was already at the stem of life.

It was a cold wintry night—the town-clock had already struck twelve. Mrs. Lindsley had just returned from the window, to see if she could catch a glimpse of the returning form of her husband; but no human shape was visible through the dim and shadowy moonlight. All without was still as the repose of the grave, save the creaking of some loose board on the fence, that now and then was swung by the wind. The fire, which had been fed by an economical hand, while the patient wife sat up to watch the return of him, the sound of whose tread, after an evening's absence, *once* made her heart leap with joy—was reduced to a small bed of coals. She had often set up longer and later to wait his return; but now faintness and fatigue constrained her to think of retiring. Again, with feeble and tottering step, she went to the window, and strained her eye to see if no signs of his approach could be discovered. But he came not! The lonely hours of that evening she had spent in much prayer for her husband. Faith seemed to assure her that there was still hope. She wished to welcome his return with kindness. But he came not! Raking the ashes over the expiring embers, she went to her solitary couch with a sad and sorrowful heart.

That evening was spent far differently by her husband. He was presiding in the atheistical club, and on no previous occasion had he ever gone to such fearful lengths. Having drank deeply, he gave full vent to all the malicious and malignant feelings of his heart. Not content with reviling the piety of men, and the purity of angels, he assailed the throne of God, uttering the most horrid blasphemies, and pouring forth such a torrent of oaths and imprecations, that the whole company were startled, and stood aghast with horror.

It was from such a scene that Mr. Lindsley went to his family about two o'clock in the morning. Finding Mrs. Lindsley had retired, he compelled her to get up and remain

Unkind treatment.The danger of impenitent men.

in her night dress, in a cold room, where there was no fire, till morning. Having locked the doors of this room, he walked the floor till the day dawned, renewing his strain of blasphemy, and polluting the very atmosphere with incessant profanity.

In vain did the feeble and shivering form of his wife silently appeal to his pity—in vain did she entreat him not to hurl defiance at the throne of God. There was no pity, no feeling in him. His heart was converted into stone. Sin which dragged angels from heaven—sin which desolated paradise—sin which dug hell and kindled its unquenchable fires—sin had transformed this man into a fiend. This is no exaggerated picture. I have most rigidly adhered to a statement of naked facts. And what do these facts show? They show, that there slumbers enough rebellion in the heart of any unconverted sinner to desolate the universe. Mr. Lindsley was once regarded as possessing a most amiable and lovely character. But his heart all the time was unchanged. When once the Spirit of God was withdrawn from him, the evil which lay dormant within was roused to action. Reader! has thy heart been changed? If not, thou canst not say how soon that “carnal mind” which is within thee, and which is “enmity against God,” may urge thee on to a brink no less awful and perilous than that on which Mr. Lindsley now stood. He had all the securities to virtue and morality which any one can have, whose heart is not given up to God. There is no safety out of Christ. There is no safety for any human being, over whose head the Eternal Jehovah does not hold his shield. None but those who give themselves up to him have a promise that He will keep them. Let it not be forgotten, that the impenitent—he who resists the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and refuses to submit his heart to God, has *no keeper*.

CHAPTER V.

THE INFIDEL ON HIS DEATH-BED.

A death-bed's a detector of the heart.

YOUNG.

THEY who deny the truth and credibility of the Bible, though they often laugh at the weakness and delusion of Christians, and make loud boast of the fearlessness and undisturbed tranquillity with which they can look upon the approach of death, most generally in that dread and trying hour turn cowards. The eagerness which they manifest to unsettle the faith of others, and the reckless and impious air with which they lay their desecrating hand upon all that is holy, are but symptoms of the pangs within—are but wretched shifts to drown that awful voice which the Spirit of God is ringing in the startled ear of conscience.

So it was with Mr. Lindsley. In fleeing from the Spirit of God, he rushed into the pathway of guilt. To still the voice of conscience, that he might travel that path undisturbed, he tried to disbelieve the Bible; but the truth had been graven in such deep and living characters upon his heart, that it could not be thus erased. Whenever he allowed himself to reflect, the burning conviction, in spite of all his avowed infidelity, still clung blistering to his heart, that there was an awful hell, in which God would one day punish him for his sins. Death, therefore, whenever it was brought near, came clothed in tenfold terror.

An event illustrative of this remark occurred while his family still remained with him. In returning on horseback,

How an infidel supports himself on a sick-bed.

one night, from a scene of revelry, he was thrown from his horse, and so seriously injured, that his life for some time was despaired of. During his confinement, it was observable to all who visited him, how bitter and dreadful the thoughts of death were to him. Not a word of infidelity, nor an oath, dropped from his lips while he lay thus near the confines of eternity.

Hopes were then entertained that a permanent change would be wrought in him. But the first place he visited, after leaving his sick room, was a rum-stall. He immediately returned to his former courses, apparently with increased relish—certainly with more unbridled indulgence.

It now became evident to all, that the excess and dissipation in which he indulged would soon break down his constitution, and terminate his life. The event showed that these apprehensions were well grounded.

A few months after his acts of cruelty had banished his wife and daughter from his home, he was attacked with an inflammatory complaint, which daily became more and more alarming, and threatened to terminate speedily his earthly career.

He at first did not consider his disease dangerous, and therefore, with the help of his companions, who were often with him, he for a while kept up his spirits. The profane jest, the loud laugh, and the merry carousal, dissipated the gloom and tediousness of the sick room. But as the violence of his disorder increased, the visits of these profligate companions became more seldom. For vice and profligacy do not love to look upon the grisly features of the king of terrors.

Mr. Lindsley began to feel the want of that kind attendance which mitigates the sufferings, and eases the pains of a sick-bed. He thought of his mother—she was in her grave. He thought of his wife—wormwood and gall were in that thought! Why was she not by his side? Often had she tended around his bed of sickness with all the nursing care and tenderness which fond attention could

Remorse.

The faithful exhortation.

dictate. Why did not her meek and gentle form now stand by the side of that couch of languishing? Ah, he knew too well the cause; and the remembrance of it was like a poniard to his heart.

Mr. Lindsley had now to spend many hours alone—they were hours of darkness, of desolateness, and direful anguish—often filled up with oaths, imprecations, and blasphemy. At times the frail form of his much injured and heart-broken wife would seem to glide before him—and then for a moment his feelings would relent, and the determination would be formed, that she should be entreated to return. But as the thought was revolved over in his mind, pride would start up, and force him to a different conclusion. “No,” he would say, “never shall the words I uttered when she for the last time bade me adieu, be recalled: I then said, and the word shall never be revoked—*Go—go to those you care more for than for me, and know that your presence will never be again welcomed beneath this roof, till my body is borne lifeless over that threshold.*”

It was in the midst of these reflections, that the minister of the place, a young man, ardent in his feelings, and bent upon being faithful to the souls committed to his charge, called upon Mr. Lindsley. He was acquainted with the history of the man, and knowing that he stood upon the borders of eternity, he thought it his duty to warn him of the awful plunge he was about to make. With a firm and fearless voice he told him, “That dying in his present state he would sink into everlasting ruin—that nothing but the blood of Christ could wash away the ten thousand stains of guilt with which he was defiled—that he must repent—that he must have faith in Christ—that his heart must be changed, else there was not the slightest hope for him—that he had no time to spare—that he ought to pray every instant until death stopt his breath—and that with his permission he would now appeal to the throne of grace in his behalf.”

The enmity of the natural heart.Delusive expedient.

All this was kindly intended. It evinced faithfulness on the part of the man of God. But at the same time, there was, perhaps, a want of prudence in *the manner* in which this conversation was introduced. It stirred up the fierce passions, and exasperated the maddened feelings, of this dying profligate. His "face gathered blackness," and there was visible upon every feature wrath, and bitterness, and scorn. Stubborn and unsubdued, he spurned all his entreaties and counsel, and bade him "not to presume to be *his mouth-piece* to the Almighty."

A few days after this interview, this wretched man became, for the first time, impressed with the full conviction that he should never recover. The thought of death, judgment, and the solemn realities of the Bible, filled his soul with consternation and dread. Like a drowning man, he now stretched out his hands—eager to grasp at any thing that afforded the slightest hope of keeping him from sinking into the dreadful gulf that gaped beneath. He remembered that the Rev. Mr. Z—— was officiating in a neighbouring village. On a former occasion, when in great affliction, this man had poured the balm of Christian consolation into his wounded heart. It was he that officiated (he then being their pastor) at the funeral of Mr. Lindsley's son, whose death has been noticed in the former part of this narrative.

For the character of this man Mr. Lindsley still retained a high respect. And now that life seemed waning, and the awful scenes of eternity were ready to burst upon him, he felt no disposition to wear longer the wretched mask of hypocrisy. He wished for a spiritual counsellor. A request was accordingly sent to the Rev. Mr. Z——, soliciting the favour of a visit.

This man was truly venerable and apostolic in his appearance. Age had added to a stout and well-proportioned form a dignity that comported admirably with his sacred office. The sweetness of his temper, and the amiability of his heart, exhibited themselves not only in the soft and

persuasive accents in which he spoke, but in the striking and uniform urbanity and gentleness of his manners. But with this great mildness, he united decision and energy of character. In all matters of indifference, the benevolence of his heart led him to be as yielding to the wishes of those around him as the flexible reed to the wind; but where duty or principle was involved, he was as firm and immovable as the ocean rock that has remained for centuries unmoved, amid the fierce dashing of ten thousand waves.

Such was the character of the man that, in obedience to the summons he had received, now approached the sick-bed of Mr. Lindsley. Kindness beamed upon his countenance as he entered the room, and the first expressions of sympathy he uttered for the sufferer before him, gave naturally a serious and religious turn to the conversation. He affectionately entreated the sick and dying man to "acquaint himself with God, and be at peace." He set before him, in a succinct and luminous manner, the way of salvation—"repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

To all this Mr. Lindsley seemed to listen, as to something that was to be said, as a matter of course. As Mr. Z—— paused, he rather abruptly, and in a tone that savoured very little of broken-hearted contrition, said, "Sir, I have sent for you to baptize me."

"Nothing," replied the man of God, "can give me higher satisfaction, than to administer to you this holy rite, if you can exhibit evidence that you possess proper qualifications for receiving it. It is not to be concealed," continued Mr. Z——, "for standing here as the minister and messenger of God, I dare not 'speak smooth things or prophesy deceits'—it is not to be concealed, that you have lived in open and avowed disbelief of the Christian religion—you cannot receive baptism without declaring your decided belief in the truth of this religion."

The interview.

"That I can honestly and sincerely do," said the sick man.

"No man liveth and sinneth not," continued the aged minister; "and every returning sinner, before he can be admitted into the fold of Jesus, must confess, bewail, and renounce his sins—the best man living has sins enough to mourn over—and must be finally saved, if saved at all, by free and unmerited grace. But, *you*, I say it in kindness, *you* have been no common sinner. There is a load of guilt on your soul, which, if its whole weight be felt, must press you down very low in the depths of sorrow."

"I know it, I feel it," replied Mr. Lindsley, with more emotion than he had before exhibited; "I have been a wicked, a very wicked man, but I repent me of my sins."

"You are then willing to declare that you solemnly and for ever 'renounce the devil and all his works,'—that you will hereafter turn from and detest sin, and whatever is sinful?"

"I am ready to do this," responded Mr. Lindsley.

"O, sir," continued the faithful minister, "it is a very solemn business to put ourselves in the attitude of covenanting with God. His piercing eye looks into the inmost recesses of the heart—he sees the hidden motive—he cannot be deceived—he will not be mocked; allow me to read the interrogatories that will be addressed to you at the time of baptism."

Here Mr. Z—— read, from the baptismal service, the questions that are put to the candidate immediately previous to his receiving that solemn ordinance, inquiring of the sick man, at the close of each question, if he could in sincerity subscribe to what was there demanded.

To each of which he replied by the single monosyllable, "Yes."

"Mr. Lindsley," said this venerable negotiator between God and man, new energy lighting up his countenance as he spoke: "Mr. Lindsley, I wish you to be saved—and therefore I must deal faithfully with you. Have you

Probing questions.

indeed considered what it is to receive baptism? have you weighed the meaning of those questions? have you thought how much is implied in renouncing 'the sinful desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow nor be led by them?' Consider what a state of affections this implies. No matter what may be your wishes, your desires, or your inclinations—if they are not in strict accordance with the holy will of God,—you bind yourself by the most solemn of vows to 'renounce' them—to give them up—to sacrifice them—though the effort cost you as much pain as the amputation of an arm, or the plucking out of an eye. Are you ready to sacrifice self, and bow thus submissively to the will of God?

"Consider in whom you profess faith! In Christ! That Christ whom you have denied, abjured, and blasphemed. In receiving baptism you declare, that abandoning every other hope, you look to him alone for salvation—you cast yourself upon his free mercy—fully sensible that unless he saves you by an act of infinite grace, you must perish—and that if you perish, you are determined to perish at the foot of the cross.

"Consider also that you are to vow, that you will not only abandon your former courses, and habits, and sins—making a complete surrender of yourself to Christ, your King; but that you 'will obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life.' What surrender could be more perfect than this? What profession of religion could be more solemn or unqualified?

"Now, sir, are you willing thus to give yourself up to God? Allow me to specify. You cannot but be sensible, if you have any right views of your own past conduct—you cannot but be sensible that you have injured—cruelly injured your family. The only reparation that you can now make them, is a frank and humble acknowledgment of the ill-treatment they have received at your hands. Nothing can prevent your making this acknowledgment,

unless it be a remaining 'sinful desire of the flesh.' That desire you must sacrifice, or never receive baptism from my hands."

The religious feelings which at this time existed in the bosom of Mr. Lindsley had been awakened solely by the fear of death, and the dread of that punishment that follows death. While occupied by this one absorbing emotion, which grew more intense with every advancing step of terror's king, the proud and rebellious spirit of depraved nature lay in a state of dormancy—but it was not subdued. Agonized at the thought of dying in guilt, and dropping into endless perdition, Mr. Lindsley was anxious to perform some external act of religion, from which he might gather some gleam of hope: forgetting in this hour of mental agony, that external ordinances can be of no avail, without the heart is right in the sight of God.

That which determined him to send for the Rev. Mr. Z——, at this time, as his spiritual counsellor, was the uniform character this man sustained for dove-like gentleness and universal benevolence. With such a counsellor he hoped his path to the grave would be rendered smooth, and his passage to the eternal world easy; and that he should be spared the painful business of laying bare to the severing knife the dark depravity and deep corruptions of the inner man.

When, contrary to his expectation, his spiritual counsellor applied a searching caustic to every wound, and with a discriminating perception that seemed almost divine, touched that string in his heart to which a thousand feelings of concealed but deep-rooted depravity vibrated—making, *a reconciliation with his family—an acknowledgment to them of sorrow and contrition for the many evils they had suffered at his hands*—the sole condition upon which he would administer baptism to him—Mr. Lindsley hastily replied, and the tones of his voice were those, not of an humble, dying penitent, but of a self-willed and unsubdued sinner,

Relentings.

Confession of an infidel.

“That acknowledgment, sir, I can never make.”

“Then,” said Mr. Z——, with a solemn and emphatic tone, “I can never baptize you. And,” continued he, “as I see no prospect of being of any further service to you, I will now take my leave.”

He accordingly arose and proceeded to take his departure. His hand was already upon the latch of the door, when the sick man, raising himself up in his bed, his countenance exhibiting ten thousand conflicting and soul-racking emotions, exclaimed,

“O my God, must I then die unbaptized ! !”

The kind-hearted minister, affected even to tears at this sudden burst of feeling, turned round and said,

“Deluded man, baptism cannot wash the deep corruption—the crimson stains of guilt from your heart. Until your feelings are changed, and your stubborn will subdued, there is no hope for you.”

“Hear me,” said the sick man, gathering new strength from the intensity of internal and agonized feeling. “Hear me—if *you* desert me, then there is no hope ;” and as he spoke, torrents of scalding tears coursed down his haggard checks—“I wish to be baptized for several reasons—one is, that I may declare my belief in the Christian religion, which, although I have often abjured with my lips, I have never doubted in my heart. I am sensible that I am now near eternity, and that hell is yawning beneath the very place where I lie. I would be saved. My pride has been my ruin. That prevented me from giving up my heart, and from going forward to unite myself with the church of Christ, at a season when the Spirit of God wrestled powerfully with my soul. O, had I then accepted of the overtures of mercy, chosen the Lord for my portion, and bound myself by a solemn and inviolable vow to the service of my Maker, what a tremendous wreck should I have avoided ! My pride just now would not suffer me to make peace with the wife of my youth, and the child of my early love. Yes, I have *cruelly injured them*. They were all that is

Proposed reconciliation.

kind, gentle, holy, affectionate, and lovely ; and, amid all the bitter breathings and envenomed rancour of this wretched heart, I have ever loved them, and love them still."

Exhausted by this effort to unburden the conflicting emotions of his soul, Mr. Lindsley now sunk back upon his bed in silence. A milder and more subdued aspect sat upon his countenance, than had before been observed.

Mr. Z—— then told him, that on his way to visit him, he had fallen in with Mrs. Lindsley and Mary Anna, and that they were now in the village, ready to fly to his embrace. "Will you not"—continued he—"allow me to call upon them, and assure them that you truly deplore the misdemeanours of your life, and desire, before you depart hence, next to being reconciled to God, a perfect reconciliation with them?"

To this Mr. Lindsley immediately consented, and in a few minutes the wife and daughter were at his bedside.

CHAPTER VI.

DARKNESS IN DEATH.

“That day of wrath, that dreadful day
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner’s stay ?
How shall he meet that dreadful day ?
When shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll ;
When louder yet, and yet more dread
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead !
O, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be *Thou* the trembling sinner’s stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away.”

SCOTT.

THE parted family were again beneath the same roof, and happy in each other’s presence. All former unkindness was forgotten. The mother and daughter were now unwearied in their attentions and efforts to contribute to the comfort of the sick and dying man. The object of their constant and most tender solicitude, was, that he might be prepared to enter upon that dread eternity which now stretched before him.

Baptism had been administered to him—he having given evidences of contrition and repentance, that, in the view of his spiritual guide, justified this act.

“Who”—said Mr. Lindsley, as he lay upon his bed one afternoon, now greatly debilitated, his countenance changed, and his features exhibiting evidences of a chastened and subdued spirit—no one at the time being in the room except Mary Anna,—

The deputation from the infidel club.Soliloquy.

“Who was that, that just called?”

“Richard H——,” said Mary Anna.

“Ah,” said the father, “what could have brought Richard here? Men of his stamp do not usually like to visit those who are treading on the misty verge of eternity.”

“He said,” replied Mary Anna, “that he should like to see you to drive away moping melancholy. But mamma told him, that it was your particular desire to be kept quiet, and not be permitted to be disturbed by visitors.”

“She did right in not admitting him, and yet I could almost wish that she had, that I might have told him of that deep and burning hell into which he and the club will sink; of that dreadful cup of indignation that they will drink at the hand of God through all eternity. But no—he would have laughed and made a joke of it, and I am too weak, and too unsettled in my own hopes to have overcome him by reasoning.”

Here he paused as though in a deep and painful revery.

The infidel club, of which Mr. Lindsley had been an active member, hearing of his religious concern, and desire to receive baptism, sent at various times a deputation to dissuade him from what they termed “apostasy.”

He uniformly declined seeing them, remarking, “that he needed all his time to make preparation for the awful change that awaited him.”

It was one of that miserable gang that had just called, and to whom the foregoing conversation related.

Mary Anna did not feel disposed to interrupt the train of her father’s thoughts, and he therefore mused on for a while in silence. At length, as though unconscious of the presence of any other being, he thus gave utterance to the thoughts that were moving in his mind.

“That was the guiltiest night of all! Those recollections, as though steeped in the burning waters below, how they scorch my wildered brain! Ah! what if in the fearful day of final reckoning my Judge shall call up the remembrance, and place before me, in vivid perception, the

Bitter recollections.

The material sun.

transactions of *that night*—*that night* when I stamped on the book of God, and reviled, and sneered at, and blasphemed the name of Christ. O, what maddening thoughts come thick and crowding upon my memory !”

Here Mary Anna, alarmed at the energetic and almost frantic manner of her father, moved her chair in turning to look upon him. The slight noise occasioned by this movement recalled to his recollection the presence of his daughter.

In a calmer, but no less solemn manner, he continued, “O, my child, you know nothing of those dark portions of my existence. You have felt the blighting influence of the demon within me. In bitterness, and by a course of conduct cruel as the grave, I drove you and your mother from my dwelling ; but there are darker and more desolate passages in my history than this. And, if in the awful hour when I meet the Judge Eternal, he shall point to those scenes, I shall acknowledge the justice of that sentence which sweeps me into the fiery concave of endless wo.”

“O, my dear father,” said Mary Anna, agitated with deep feeling, and anxious to turn his desponding eye to some beacon of hope—“there is a Saviour for sinners. Jesus Christ died for sinners. He tells us that he is ‘able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him,’ and ‘that whosoever cometh unto him he will in nowise cast out.’ ”

“Yes, my child,” said he, “there is a Saviour, but I do not know that I have gone to him, or given myself up to him.”

He then asked her to draw the curtain of the window, and let in a little more light. She did so, and the rays of the setting sun streamed into the room in all their rich and golden lustre.

“How glorious,” said he, “is the material sun, but infinitely more glorious and resplendent is *the Sun of righteousness*. O, that I could see *Him* thus shining upon my darkened soul ! Sometimes I venture to cherish a little

Fearful forebodings.

hope. I felt a satisfaction in receiving baptism. I wished to bear testimony of my firm belief in the religion of the cross. That cross now emits the only transient ray of hope that falls upon my darkened vision. I know not how it will be with me. I have sinned against light and knowledge, against warnings the most solemn, and convictions the most deep—against love, and kindness, and mercy. I shall not be surprised, when I open my eyes in eternity, if I am in hell.”

These were the last remarks he ever made. The violence of his disorder rapidly increased, and that very night he crossed the mystic line that separates time from eternity.

In this melancholy narrative, we have striking proof, that they who resist the strivings of the Spirit, and neglect the divinely appointed means of grace, do verily reject the counsel of God against themselves, and ultimately provoke him “to swear in his wrath that they shall never enter into his rest.”

Will it be suggested, that perhaps the subject of this memoir found mercy at last? It may be he did. It was natural for his friends to hope that he did.

But, reader, art thou willing to risk thy eternity upon such a *perhaps*? Canst thou witness this exit of a fellow mortal, whose dying moments were clouded with uncertainty and doubt, bordering upon despair, and not shudder at the thought of closing thy earthly career amid such appalling darkness. Yet, if thou deferrest the work of thy salvation till to-morrow, what security hast thou that thy end will not be like the end of this man!

It is the exalted privilege of those whose hopes are upon the rock Christ Jesus, to die with comfort—often with triumph; and their death is not unfrequently made instrumental in producing great and lasting good.

This remark was strikingly illustrated in the death of Mrs. Lindsley, an account of which will be given in the next chapter.

CHAP. VII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SUPPORT IN DEATH.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

From the 37th Psalm.

THE scenes of sorrow and suffering through which Mrs. Lindsley had passed, had ruined her health and broken her heart. Consumption, which with her maternal family was an hereditary disease, was already gnawing upon her vitals. Two months after Mr. Lindsley's death, she was laid low in the earth by his side. She was sensible for many weeks that her final hour would soon come. She often spoke of the arrival of that hour as of an event that would release her from a world of sin and sorrow, and translate her to the presence of her Saviour and God.

She waited in patience her appointed time. And her last hours bore striking testimony to the power of divine grace, and were blessed, as there is every reason to believe, to the *saving of a soul from death*.

Mr. Lindsley's abandonment of the club of which he had formerly been so prominent a member—his solemn renunciation of those skeptical views which he had once so assiduously propagated—his firm and avowed conviction of a future existence—his awful apprehensions of a ruined eternity—and his extreme anxiety to gather from the pages of the Bible, and the institutions of the gospel, hopes to support him in the trying hour of death, gave a fatal blow to that corrupt and guilty association.

His death, and the circumstances connected with it, seemed to produce a deep and abiding impression upon the

Early history of Richard H—.

mind of one of his former associates, Richard H—, whose name has been incidentally mentioned in this narrative. This man was better read, and more intellectually established in skepticism than any other individual in the atheistical club.

His mother, who died when he was young, was an eminently pious woman. During her life, his religious education was with her a subject of deep and constant solicitude. She sought by every maternal art and endearment to win his young and tender heart to the love of Jesus. Often and ardently did she pour out her soul in supplication to God for her child. She asked for him neither wealth, nor honour, nor eminence; but simply, *grace*. And her dying words were,

“Adorable Jesus, by all thy wounds, and agony, and blood, *save*, I entreat thee, *save my child*.”

Richard at this time was quite young, and, after the death of his mother, not having any pious friend to counsel or instruct him, his early impressions were apparently soon effaced. He became addicted to irregular courses, and seemed to have no fear of God before his eyes. As he grew up, however, he evinced strong native powers of mind, and passed through his collegiate course with great credit to himself. While in college he imbibed the absurd idea—an idea which has ruined many a youth of great promise—that superiority of intellect can be displayed only in leaving the beaten track, and originating new systems and theories. These same views influenced him even in religious matters; and falling in with several French writers, he at once embraced their voluptuous and skeptical philosophy, and thus became in his religious sentiments a perfect *free-thinker*.

Nothing ever occurred to arouse him from his dreams of infidelity, until the death of Mr. Lindsley. He had for many years been addicted to habits of intemperance, and, in his association with Mr. Lindsley, found himself united to a kindred spirit. The death of Mr. Lindsley, as we

Calm and tranquil contemplation of death.

remarked, seemed to startle him. He became evidently more thoughtful and temperate. He was frequently heard to say with some concern, in the presence of religious people,

“If the Bible be true, I wish to know it. If there is a hell, I certainly do not wish to go there.”

As Mrs. Lindsley's health declined, he frequently called to make inquiries after her. The afternoon on which she expired, he came to the house, and being informed that she was sinking rapidly, begged the privilege of seeing her. At this time Mrs. Lindsley was still able to converse, and all her words breathed forth the sweetness and amiability of the religion she professed. She expressed no overweening confidence in relation to her acceptance with God, but at the same time it was manifest that her faith in the power and mercy of the Redeemer was firm and unshaken. Meek and resigned to his will, her whole appearance indicated the most perfect calmness and serenity. She at times spoke to those around her, and affectionately entreated them to *prepare to meet their God*.

To one who expressed regret at finding her so low, she replied,

“Ought you to regret that I am going home. As long as I remain here I must inhabit this body of suffering and sin. But when released from it, I hope through the infinite mercy of God in Christ, to be pure, and perfectly happy. Then may I not say, ‘for me to die is gain?’”

A short time after she remarked,

“The Saviour says, ‘I know my sheep.’ This is a delightful thought to the soul that is about to be launched into the world of spirits. Amid that multitude—that ten thousand times ten thousand—yea, those countless millions of souls that have gone and are going into the invisible world, Christ sees and knows, and instantly recognises all those who belong to his flock, and will neither overlook nor forget one of them.”

Then turning to a friend who sat by her bed, she said,

“ Will you take the Bible and open at the 10th chapter of St. John’s gospel, and read the 28th and 29th verses ?”

The request was immediately complied with, and her friend read as follows :

“ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

“ These are indeed comforting words”—she added after the passage had been read—“ they are to my soul ‘like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.’ ‘I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish’—precious promise !”

Mr. H—— stood, and for a long time time gazed in silence upon this lovely woman, gently sinking down into “the valley and shadow of death,” and sustained at every step by the arm of the Omnipotent Jesus. She at length lifting up her eyes, said to him,

“ Mr. H——, I have often heard that you had a pious mother ; I hope soon to meet her in heaven. O, that I could be the bearer to her of the happy intelligence, that the child whom she so tenderly loved, and whose salvation she so earnestly supplicated in her dying hour, was treading the narrow path to join her in the skies !”

A thunderbolt from the throne of Omnipotence would not have more suddenly startled, or more powerfully agitated Mr. H——, than did this remark. His whole appearance bespoke uncommon emotion, and a torrent of tears immediately rushed down his stern and swarthy cheek. Perhaps no language can give to the reader a more accurate idea of the deep workings of his mind at that moment, than the account which he himself gave to an acquaintance some years after, when he had become to all appearance a sincere believer, and a truly reformed man.

“ The dying chamber of Mrs. Lindsley,” said he, “ was the place where all the strong ramparts of infidelity within which my mind was intrenched, were suddenly over-

The dying words of a Christian blessed to the conversion of an infidel.

thrown, and where the light of God's truth broke in upon my soul in spite of all resistance. I had read many infidel authors, and considered my principles as unalterably fixed. I had also examined most of the works that had been written in defence of Christianity, and found nothing in them to shake my opinions. But what argument, and learning, and talent could not do, the exhibition of divine power could. As I stood looking upon Mrs. Lindsley, calm, collected, and unshaken in a situation in which the courage of many a warrior would have quailed, I asked myself—

“ ‘What supports that frail and feeble woman? Is it enthusiasm? No. A spirit as tranquil and passionless as hers must be a stranger to enthusiasm. Is it natural firmness of nerve? No. She has it not. Through life, from the very delicacy of her physical structure, she has been as tremblingly alive to every rude touch as the sensitive plant. What power then is it that enables her to look so tranquilly upon all the horrors that cluster around the thought of dissolution and death? *It is the power—a voice seemed to whisper in my ear—it is the power of God.*’

“It was at this moment that Mrs. Lindsley addressed me, and spoke of my mother. Her sainted image instantly rose before me. Her looks, her words of kindness, her prayers, and her pious instruction were all as fresh in my recollection as if she had died but the day before. And now every ‘refuge of lies,’ in which I had long trusted, forsook me—I could not summon a single infidel argument to sustain me. I felt like a drowning man that is sinking to the bottom of the ocean. And from that hour I could never emancipate myself from the rooted conviction of the truth of the Bible. I view myself as ‘a brand plucked from the burning,’ and through eternity I shall bless God, that in his infinite mercy he led me to the sick and dying chamber of Mrs. Lindsley.”

Mrs. Lindsley gradually sunk down into the sleep of death, the light of heaven continuing to beam upon her to

Reflections of an orphan daughter.

the very last gasp. The last words that she uttered, were those of prayer and praise. As life was rapidly waning, she faintly breathed these words,

“Jesus, to thy dear faithful hand
My naked soul I trust.”

Mary Anna stood by the bed holding her chilled and icy hand. Turning to her a look of affection, her eye sparkling with hope, she added,

“I find my child, that

“Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

With these words she breathed out her life.

Mary Anna, who had already passed through many trials, was now left to struggle with new difficulties. They, who are surrounded by the delightful presence and warm affection of parents, can know but little of the sorrows of an orphan. Even where a mother survives, though in feeble and declining health, her counsel and soothing words give buoyancy to the spirits, and fill us with the delightful consciousness that there is one being whose affection cannot be alienated, and whose interest in us can suffer no diminution. But when she is taken, and we stand unconnected by a single kindred tie to the rest of the world, the bereavement is indeed dreadful, and there cannot fail to be felt a sense of loneliness, which no language can describe.

Thus it was with Mary Anna Lindsley. As she returned from the grave of her mother, she could not refrain from asking herself,

“What is there now left in this world for me? I have no friends—no means of subsistence—the last eye that looked kindly on me is now closed in death—there is nothing on this earth for me to lean upon! But blessed be the eternal Jehovah ‘the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort,’ who has promised that he will be a ‘Father to the fatherless.’ That promise I will now claim. I will

God the father of the fatherless.

lean upon his heavenly arm, and give up myself entirely to his guidance and direction."

Happy are they, who by their afflictions are thus led to make a complete surrender of themselves into the hands of their Creator. That gracious and almighty Being never disappoints those who trust in him. He will most assuredly make "all things work together for good to them that love him."

Friends were quickly raised up to pour the soothing balm of consolation into the bosom of this young orphan. One who had long known and appreciated her worth, and for whom she had the highest esteem, sought her hand.

About a year had now elapsed since the death of her mother. Grief had begun to subside, and hope to point to a brighter day. She was soon to be married to a man whose principles and character both her heart and judgment approved.

They were sitting together, at the close of a summer's day, under an arbour in a delightful garden. Universal nature was dressed in smiles. He was reading a beautiful poem on the joys of heaven.

As he paused for a moment, Mary Anna inquired,

"Do you think that friends will recognise each other in eternity?"

"Certainly," he replied—"though I might find it difficult to state definitely, upon what evidence that opinion is founded. St. Paul I think incidentally asserts this doctrine. Addressing those whom he had been instrumental in turning to righteousness, he informs them that he cherished the delightful hope, that they would be his 'crown of rejoicing' at the appearing of Christ in the day of judgment. This they could not be, unless recognised by him in that hour."

"My mind," said Mary Anna, "while you have been reading, has been running over the scenes of my childhood, and the striking and awful events that have marked the history of my family. I fully believe that all those afflictive

Sudden death.

dispensations were ordered in mercy—they were intended by a merciful Heaven to sanctify and save. Affliction is good for me. So deeply am I convinced of this, that I look with suspicion and fear upon every anticipated prospect of earthly happiness. Yes, sorrow is the better path for me while I remain in this sinful world; and when I leave it, I trust, through the boundless mercy of a crucified Redeemer, to participate in the unending joys of heaven.”

These last words were uttered with such an unearthly accent, that her friend turned to look at her. An ashy paleness suddenly came over her countenance. It was the paleness of death! A blood vessel had been suddenly ruptured; and in a few fleeting moments she was in eternity, furnishing another melancholy proof, that “in the midst of life we are in death.”

It was over the graves of this family that I stood and meditated long upon the instability and emptiness of earth, contrasting its perishing vanities with the enduring realities of heaven, which are the purchase of Christ, and will be the inheritance of his people. Reader, may divine grace make thee one of those people, and bring both thee and the writer of these pages at last “unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” to join “the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven.”

ONE WHOSE RECORD IS ON HIGH.

CHAPTER I.

DISCOURSE BY THE WAY.

“Hath not thy voice been here amongst us heard !
And that deep soul of gentleness and power,
Have we not felt its breath in every word,
Wont from thy lips, as Hermion’s dew, to shower !
Yes ! in our hearts thy fervent thoughts have burn’d,
Of heaven they were, and thither are return’d.”

MRS. HEMANS.

SEVERAL years since it was my privilege to travel a few days in company with a clerical friend, whose conversation not only beguiled the way of its tediousness, but imparted much material for thought, and left impressions of scenes and incidents that time will probably never efface. We travelled in our own private carriage, which was a one-horse vehicle, and designed to accommodate merely two persons. Thus we had no one to disturb or interrupt our conversation as we passed along the road, with the blue sky stretching over our heads, and the broad earth with all its variegated scenes spreading out before us. We moved on at a pace just rapid enough to produce that intellectual excitement which is favourable to conversation—that brisk circulation of ideas, which does not exhaust, but rather refreshes the mind, and awakens a succession of pleasurable emotions. Every thing around us seemed to conspire

A country scene in Autumn.

to give interest to the scene. It was late in autumn, though the weather still continued fine, and the roads excellent. The day to which I particularly refer, we were passing through a very rough and rocky country. The lands that lay directly on the road seemed to be covered with a second growth of wood, which for many miles gave to our route the appearance of a journey through the wilderness. This young forest, however, was frequently broken by intervening spaces of cultivated land, where the proofs of a hard and rocky soil were brought out distinctly to view.

The frost had changed the colour of the foliage, and imparted to it every variety of hue. The leaves had just begun to fall, and strew the ground with the relics of their faded glory. All nature seemed sedate and sober, and yet cheerful. The air was clear and invigorating, and yet bland and balmy. The sky was not darkened with a single cloud, and the sun was moving on with its wonted majesty, pouring over earth and heaven floods of glowing brilliancy. It was one of autumn's finest, sweetest, loveliest days. My friend and fellow traveller felt the pervading influence of the surrounding scene, and I encouraged him to give utterance to the glowing thoughts and burning emotions that had been kindled up within. Some incidental circumstance, by the power of association, brought to his recollection the memory of one who seemed to have shared largely his affections, and whom he emphatically described as ONE WHOSE RECORD IS ON HIGH. The sketch that follows, delineating some traits in his character, will be merely the rehearsal of the remarks of my friend. The reader, therefore, must regard this clerical friend as speaking in his own person in all that follows, and the author as merely performing the part of an amanuensis.

There is a melancholy, yet sweet and holy satisfaction arising from a visit to the grave of a dear friend. Often have I stole away from the habitations of the living, and

The power of association.

gone and sat down alone on the grave of my mother, and communed with that silent dust, that was once moulded into symmetry, a living, breathing form, animated with looks of kindness and love, and the dwelling place of an immortal mind. And as I have sat there, and thought of the dust that slept beneath those sods, how have all the scenes of the past come up before me ! No portrait of that dear countenance and loved form, however accurate, could have called up to my mind more numerous associations connected with childhood's sunny hour, than did that silent, grass-covered grave on which I sat. In my visits to that hallowed spot, over which bends the stooping top of a large weeping willow, often have I thought of those lines of the affectionate Cowper, and repeated them there with my hand upon my heart, as I stood over that dear grave.

In my heart.....“the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid ;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
The fragrant waters on my cheek bestow'd,
By thine own hand, till fresh they shone, and glow'd ;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
That humour interposed too often makes ;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age.”

I have adverted to this fact, the power which the mere vicinity of the slumbering dust of those we love has to call up past recollections, to remark, that feelings not unlike these are awakened when we enter a dwelling, and sit down in a room, where we have often met a dear friend, now no more. How at such a moment does the recollec-

A lovely village.

tion of all that passed there, come up in vivid pictures before the mind! We seem to see again the eye that sparkled with intelligence—the countenance that was radiant with benevolence, and animated with glowing thought, and the whole assemblage of objects that then clustered around us, but have since passed away. We seem to hear again the tones of that voice, and the various thrilling notes of that conversation to which we once listened with so much profit and delight. Memory, aided by the power of such associations, enables us to live over the past—and to receive instruction from voices long since silent in the grave.

A few years since I passed through a sweet village, in reference to which I might have adopted the language of Goldsmith, and said,

.....“ Loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer’d the labouring swain;
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer’s lingering blooms delay’d:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter’d o’er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear’d each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm.”—

At the time to which I refer, there was no spot in that village, that in my view possessed such a charm, as the rectory—the loved habitation in which he dwelt of whom I have said—HIS RECORD IS ON HIGH. I knew before I entered this dwelling that it was no longer inhabited by the family I had been accustomed to meet there. Still I desired to sit once more in that parlour—to walk once more across the floor of that study—to look out once more from that window upon the silvery lake, and the village green. As I entered the house, every thing reminded me of the change that had taken place. Although the countenances of those who met me were bright and cheerful, and expressive of a kind and cordial reception, I felt sad; for I

Mutability of all earthly things.

could not but remember *the dead!* When I sat down, and thought that the beloved pastor, from whose lips I had received heavenly instruction, and from whose conversation I had derived the highest pleasure and improvement, was no longer the occupant of this dwelling, but was now numbered with the dead, I felt indeed,

“ ’Tis sad to see the wonted seat of friend
Removed by death : and sad to visit scenes
When old, where in the smiling morn of life
Lived many who both knew and loved us much,
And they all gone—dead, or dispersed abroad :
And stranger faces seen among their hills.”

And now as I gazed around on the altered aspect of things, all the scenes that I had passed with Mr. H—— in the room where I sat rose fresh before me, and in spite of all my efforts to prevent it, the tear started from my eye, and I could not but say almost aloud—*Thus do we all fade as a leaf, and the place that now knows us, will soon know us no more for ever.*

Some of the conversations that I listened to in that room I will try to repeat to you, though I am sure they will fail to impart the impression that they made on the occasion which called them forth. You know that the moon conveys to us reflected light. How pale and sickly a hue does its beams cast over the scenes of earth compared with the brilliancy of the sun. Still the moon conveys to us some idea of the appearance of light as it emanates from the resplendent orb of day. So my rehearsal of these conversations, though it will reveal merely a glimpse of the glowing thoughts that were then expressed with such clearness and vigour, will nevertheless give you some faint conception of the mind, and character, and piety of ONE WHOSE RECORD IS ON HIGH.

Previous, however, to making an attempt to rehearse any one of those animated conversations, I will try to give you a cursory view of the history of Mr. H——. The

Early years of Rev. Mr. H——.

most interesting points in his religious experience and ministerial life will be brought to view in those conversations to which I have just referred.

The Rev. Mr. H—— was born of pious parents ; though their views of divine truth were comparatively dark and obscure, from the influence of the same causes which threw a dense penumbra over his path during the early years of his ministerial labours. They were however sober and exemplary persons, and sought to bring the mind of their child under good and holy influences. Mr. H—— was quite a youth when he decided to devote himself to the work of the sacred ministry. He assumed the obligations, and entered upon the duties of that holy office with but little experience, and less knowledge of his own heart. Still he gave such evidence of large literary attainments, and well-disciplined intellect, that his friends were very sanguine in the expectation, that he would one day reach a high point of eminence in the church. But Christ, who seeth not as man seeth, would have said to him at this time, as he did to the young man in the gospel—*one thing thou lackest*. And with the vast and fearful responsibilities he had assumed, what was lacking was a defect of a most prodigious character. What that defect was will by and by appear.

When I first became acquainted with the Rev. Mr. H——, he had passed the meridian of life, but still possessed all his mental energies, and intellectual powers in full and undecayed vigor. In the pulpit Mr. H—— was eloquent and impressive, and had, to an uncommon extent, the power not only of holding his audiences in delighted admiration, but of piercing their hearts with the truth, and leaving impressions deep and durable upon the conscience. It was not a gaudy decoration thrown around his discourses upon which he relied for success, but the clear and pungent exhibition of solid, substantial gospel truth. He believed *that* alone was the weapon which God would arm with

High ministerial character.

power, and make mighty for the pulling down of the strong holds of sin and Satan.

In the private circle, his manners, alike removed from levity and austerity, partook of the suavity of the gentleman, and of the bland and winning kindliness of the Christian. Gravity and cheerfulness appeared to be sweetly and happily blended in his character. He was never morose, never frivolous—he was always serious, and always pleasant.

Few men possessed a happier address, or were more highly gifted in conversational powers. He had the rare faculty of investing every subject of which he spoke with a charm. Though he possessed a highly cultivated taste that could relish, and a vivid imagination that loved to be regaled, amid the beauties of nature and of art—though he possessed no inconsiderable stock of general information, and his views upon almost every subject that came in his way had been expanded and enlarged by reading and reflection—yet it was instantly observable to all who approached him, that the subject that most interested him was *Christ and him crucified*. No one could meet and be with him an hour, without seeing that that which was uppermost in his mind—which took the deepest hold of his regard—of which he never lost sight, and to which he made every thing else subordinate, was *the glory of God—personal holiness—and the salvation of dying sinners*.

You will not be surprised after this statement, to learn that Mr. H—— was eminently successful in winning souls to Christ. He was indeed greatly blessed in his untiring labours, and made the honoured instrument of “turning many to righteousness.”

At the time I was looking forward to the sacred ministry, and felt desirous to avail myself of all the helps that came in my way to fit me for the proper discharge of the high and holy duties of that responsible office, Mr. H—— was my constant counsellor and adviser. Never did I deem my time better employed, than when in the society of this de-

Interruption.

voted servant of God. For very frequently when I was present, and I presume for my improvement, Mr. H—— would give such a turn to the conversation, as would involve the discussion of topics connected with the duties and responsibilities appertaining to the sacred office. The conversations which I shall attempt to rehearse to you related principally to those subjects.

It was on one of those delightful occasions, that the question was incidentally asked, *What kind of preaching will be most successful in saving souls?*

The glow and animation which at that moment spread an almost unearthly radiance over the manly features of my honoured and now sainted friend, I can never forget. I have not the least expectation of conveying to you scarcely an idea of the fervour of feeling, or of the thrilling eloquence of manner with which the conversation was conducted on the part of Mr. H——; but the thoughts which were then expressed will not pass from my mind, while memory holds her seat in the soul.

While my travelling companion was thus preparing the way for me to listen to what had so much delighted him, we rather unexpectedly came up to a turnpike gate, where we were detained some little time, which to me appeared very long, as I feared that that state of feeling to which he had been rousing himself would pass away, before our conversation could be again renewed. But in this I was mistaken; for no sooner had the gate tender received the toll, and the horse by a free use of the whip been put in lively motion, than my friend, looking up to the clear blue sky, commenced his remarks with the poetic numbers, which stand at the head of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

"See where he walks on yonder mount, that lifts
 Its summit high, on the right hand of bliss,
 Sublime in glory, talking with his peers
 Of the incarnate Saviour's love.

.....See how

His face with heavenly ardour glows, and how
 His hand, enraptured, strikes the golden lyre!"

POLLOK.

WE cannot but believe that those who while on earth most delighted to talk of the wonders of redeeming love, and of the preciousness of Christ, will lift up their voices the loudest among the heavenly host, in sounding forth the praises of the Lamb, through whose blood they were redeemed unto God. And standing among that glorious happy throng, on the eternal mount,

....."where the river pure,
 Flows warbling down before the throne of God;
 And, shading on each side, the tree of life
 Spreads its unfading bows;"—

I often figure to myself this man of God, and behold him there clad in vestments of light, drinking in new draughts of holy love, and harping with his golden harp new harmonies, to the eternal praise of the blessed Saviour, who loved him and gave himself for him.

There was a small company of friends present on the occasion to which I referred just before our interruption. Several of these were persons who perhaps needed special instruction in relation to the way of salvation through

Christ, and him crucified.

Christ. For after all there is a vast deal of obscurity in the views of many Christians, and certainly of some Christian ministers, on this subject. As I before remarked, the inquiry had been made,

“What kind of preaching will be most successful in saving souls?”

“The preaching of the cross,” answered Mr. H——, with an emphasis and tone that riveted every eye upon him, and with an intensity of feeling that seemed to spread over his features a more than usual glow. “The preaching of the cross. Every discourse that has not Christ, and him crucified, in it, as its groundwork and main pillar, will be as ineffectual in the matter of converting the soul to God, as the attempt to batter down a wall of adamant with a marsh rush. There is nothing but the cross that can break the stony heart of impenitence. All other messages which you may carry, however solemn, impressive, or eloquent, will fall powerless upon the ears of sinners. In the gospel, *Christ* is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of every thing; and if he does not occupy the same prominent and essential place in the preaching of that gospel, that preaching will never become the power of God unto salvation to any soul. Christ must be exhibited in all his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King; as a Mediator between God and man; as the alone meritorious cause of our justification; as the sinner’s only hope, as the sinner’s great surety—his righteousness, sanctification and redemption; as the Being upon whom he depends for grace to do any thing that will be pleasing to God, and whose merits alone can render any of his actions acceptable to him. In short the saved sinner must be ‘complete in Christ.’ Col. ii. 10. Every duty should be enforced by motives drawn from our union with Christ as our spiritual head, ‘that Christ may be all and in all.’”

Mr. H—— paused for a moment, but seeing us all apparently waiting with the expectation of hearing something further from him, he modestly remarked, that he did not

First field of labour.

wish to engross the whole conversation, but if we would allow him to elucidate his ideas on this subject, he would give us a sketch of the difficulties and success he had experienced in the matter of preaching, since he had entered upon his ministerial labours.

“ I made up my mind,” continued he, “ at a very early age, to devote myself to the ministry ; and when, after completing my preparatory studies, I was invested with the holy office of an ambassador of God, I was filled with a deep sense of the awful responsibility it had imposed upon me. My destination, after receiving orders, was just what I could have desired. I was stationed in a village of some magnitude, which was surrounded by a beautiful and highly romantic country. The congregation committed to my charge was not numerous, and owing to a variety of causes, had been labouring under considerable depression for a number of years. This, thought I, is exactly the field for me ; here is room enough for labour ; here I can task all the powers of my being in the most glorious of all causes—in building up the waste places of Zion. Here is an opportunity of holding up to the view of the ignorant and the prejudiced, the principles and excellencies of our pure and apostolic church, and of awakening to vigorous action the languid members of our own communion. And when fatigued with study, or wearied with exertion, I can ramble through these fields, or recline beneath the shade of yonder grove, and gaze upon the ten thousand charms and diversified beauties that surround me ; and while thus contemplating the works of the Creator, my mind will be refreshed and invigorated, and carried up with new feelings of adoration to the Maker of this goodly scene. Such were my reflections, as I first approached the village of M——, to enter upon the duties of my charge.

“ I believe I was acceptable to my parish. The congregation rapidly increased, and never failed to listen to my sermons with great attention, and apparently deep interest. This was, of course, gratifying to the feelings of a young

Early mode of preaching.

man, in whose heart there still lingered too much of earthly passion.

“I was certainly very conscientious in my preaching, though I had very imperfect views of what was incumbent upon me as a messenger of the Lord. He had said, *Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me*. I had listened more to human guides than to the voice of the divine oracles. Still I thought myself in the way of duty. I did not deviate from what I supposed to be the true course from any considerations of fear or favour.

“I insisted much upon morality—I warned my people against excitement and enthusiasm, and endeavoured to give them right views of the Christian church, and of the sin of schism. I declared to them that a part of the counsel of God was *the establishment* of a church as the divinely appointed instrument by which sinners were to be awakened and brought into a covenant relation with God, and in which they were to be trained and fitted for their heavenly inheritance; that the form of this church was defined by the same authority which gave it being, and that it could be shown by incontrovertible testimony, that *that form was Episcopal*. I laboured much upon all these points, though in fact there was no great need of it. For my congregation understood much better the arguments in favour of Episcopacy, than those by which the truth of Christianity was proved. They had far better conceptions of the beauty and order of our ministry, than of the beauty and excellency of Christ. And there was certainly no call for a homily against excitements, for the whole mass of the people seemed as cold as if they were locked in the icy embrace of death.

“There was a still greater defect in my preaching, however, than the want of adaptedness. I delivered to my people many important truths. Repentance, obedience, and holiness, were often recurring themes in my discourses. Death, judgment, eternity, the obedient saved—the disobedient punished with everlasting destruction from

The powerless effect.

the presence of the Lord. To these affecting truths I endeavoured to give a prominence and conspicuous place in all my sermons, and they often seemed to spread great solemnity over the congregation, and leave them under deep seriousness. But, at the end of five years, I felt as though I had been labouring in vain. It is true, the external condition of the society in which I officiated was vastly improved; and the most of those who frequented the courts of the sanctuary had become better instructed in the principles, and were more firmly attached to the forms, of the church. But where were the souls saved under my ministrations? Where were the seals to my ministry? I looked for them in vain. I know not that there was a single instance of conversion in my flock during the whole period of five years. The thought gave me trouble, and the more I reflected upon it, the more I was distressed. During the same period, there had been added to the communion of another denomination in this village, more than two hundred members.

“In a purer and more primitive church—as I believed my own church to be—a church instituted by Christ for the very purpose of ‘turning men from the power of Satan unto God,’ I had done nothing. To what cause was this to be attributed? I had strove to be faithful, and proclaim the truth with all boldness. But still I felt that the sin *might* be lying at my door. I turned over this thought in my mind, till at length it became agony to me, especially when I reflected that so many immortal souls, for whom the Saviour had shed his precious blood, committed to my care, were going to the judgment bar to receive the sentence of everlasting banishment from the presence of God.

“About this time, I accidentally fell in with a neighbouring minister of another denomination, and in the course of our interview the conversation turned upon the subject of Episcopacy. I had the arguments on that subject fresh in my mind. And I still think that in reference to this matter *we* stand on the high ‘vantage ground’ of impregna-

Causes that retard and depress the Episcopal church.

ble truth. My clerical friend however at length remarked, after the discussion had gone on a while,

“ ‘I will admit that the argument is very much on your side. But, sir, the fact that you in the Episcopal church have no revivals of religion, and but very seldom instances of decided conversion, seems, to me, to be a striking testimony of God against you. And if you do not want revivals, and are not labouring to bring about conversions, the case looks to me still worse.’

“I will not stop to tell you what I said in reply to this observation, but will simply remark that this conversation was not forgotten. The remark that this gentleman made went home to my heart like a sword. I felt that my deficiency and want of success had helped to fix upon his mind the erroneous impression that was there, and contributed to depreciate in the estimation of the world the evangelical character of the Episcopal church. And I was forcibly struck with the conviction, that if an angel from heaven should prove the divine origin of Episcopacy, it would have no effect upon the public mind, unless there could be gained for this church an unquestionable character for piety and evangelical religion. And here I would remark, that wherever this church does not maintain that character, the cause will be found in the unfaithfulness of those *who bear the vessels of the sanctuary*. Unenlightened, and worldly-minded ministers, dead and lukewarm members, while they have been loud in the praises of the church, have done more to depress it, and cast it in the shade, than all the efforts of its bitterest enemies. If they who minister at our altars would seek to be men full of the Holy Ghost and divine wisdom; if, animated with the Spirit of Christ, they would but faithfully preach the truths which our liturgy everywhere breathes forth—if they would but proclaim the doctrines which are plainly stated in the thirty-nine articles, and most luminously unfolded in the homilies—in one word, if they would but make the testimony of the pulpit to accord with the testimony of the desk, then they

A grand deficiency discovered.

would be *consistent churchmen*, and all the lovers of *the Bible* would be forced to love the church.

“ Although at this time I did not know exactly wherein I had fallen short of duty, I was strongly impressed with the fearful apprehension, that my want of success was attributable to want of ministerial fidelity. I determined to spend a larger portion of time in reading the sacred Scriptures, and in prayer to God that he would enlighten me with his Spirit, and lead me in the way of truth. While acting in conformity with this determination, my attention was arrested by this passage in St. Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians—‘ *I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*’ I asked myself, Has this been my determination? A new train of thoughts was immediately started in my mind. The idea powerfully occurred to me—Was not here my deficiency? I immediately commenced reading the epistles, with a particular reference to this idea. I found a prominency given to ‘ *Christ crucified,*’ that I had never before observed; and to this marked peculiarity, I found an exact accordance in every prayer in the liturgy, and in the articles and homilies of the church. I felt that my views on the subject of salvation had always been clouded, and wondered that I had never before felt the force, nor understood the meaning of this and a thousand other similar declarations. ‘By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.’

“ I looked over my sermons, and found them deplorably deficient on this subject. I had often preached upon the subject of Christ, his example, sufferings, and death, but I never before viewed him as I now did, ‘all and in all.’ Although as a speculative point in theology, had it been stated to me in definite terms, I should have rejected it; yet the implication was spread through all my sermons, that we must obey as far as we could, and Christ would make up the deficiency; or, in other words, we were to be saved partly by our own merit, and partly by the merit of

An interview at a public inn.

Christ. Notwithstanding one of our articles stands so directly opposed to this opinion, and the Scriptures everywhere denounced it, this was the broken staff which, for five years, I had been holding out for my people to lean upon. I now no longer wondered that this poor and mutilated view of the gospel had not been blessed to the salvation of souls. I now *'determined not to know any thing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'* I determined to preach the gospel in all its integrity and entireness.

"An occurrence about this time, which appeared accidental, exerted an important influence upon me. I had occasion to visit S——, a place about thirty miles from where I resided. In returning, I fell in with Rev. Mr. G——, then a young clergyman in our church, who, though amiable, was exceedingly light and volatile in his manners, and crude in his theological views. It so happened that we were to dine together at a public inn at L——. The inn-keeper, knowing that we were clergymen, gave us a retired sitting-room by ourselves. There was an old gentleman residing in this place, Mr. J——, who had some acquaintance with young G——. He was a man of more than ordinary intellect, and though principally self-taught, was in fact well educated. He was a member of the Methodist church, and a very zealous Christian. Possessing naturally an ardent temperament, and being altogether absorbed in religion, to the worldling he would probably have appeared like an enthusiast. But I do not think that he appeared so to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant—nor to the innumerable company of angels that stand on mount Zion—nor to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. Young G——, having stepped out, and met Mr. J——, brought him to our room, rather, I presume, for the purpose of having some amusement with him, than for the expectation of being much edified by his conversation. Whatever were his motives, it was a profitable interview.

"'Your village,' said Mr. G——, 'appears to be grow-

Views of a revival.

ing finely. I see there are many new buildings put up, and the business seems to be increasing ; I expect you are all getting very rich here.'

" ' We have reason to be grateful,' said the old gentleman, with a smile of cheerfulness kindling up in his countenance, and spreading over his features,—' We have reason to be grateful for our temporal mercies. Truly in this matter the candle of the Lord hath shone upon us. But we have greater mercies to thank God for than these. He is now showering down upon us such a blessing that the place is scarcely able to contain it.'

" ' Ah !' said G——, ' and what is that ?'

" ' The Lord,' replied the old man, with kindling animation—' has given us a glorious revival of religion here.'

" ' Revival of religion !' said G——, with a very satirical tone. ' I did not know that you good Methodists ever got lukewarm and dead. I supposed that you were the last people in the world that wanted a revival !'

" ' We fall far short of what we should be,' said Mr. J—— in a tone that seemed to indicate that his feelings were hurt by young G——'s satirical manner. ' But I am sure that all Christians must wish for a revival, if they love immortal souls.'

" ' What do you mean by a revival ?' said G——, ' a stir ? a great excitement, when every one gets crazy, and thinks he is religious till he gets his senses again, and then becomes more wicked than ever ? From such revivals, stirs, and excitements, *good Lord deliver us.*'

" The tear dropped from the old man's eye, and he said very solemnly,

" ' I am shocked to hear a minister of the gospel speak of such matters with so much lightness !'

" ' And what do you mean by a revival then ?' said G——.

" ' What do I mean by a revival ? I mean that increased interest in religion which both Christians and the impenitent evince when the Spirit of God is poured out in an

especial manner upon any place. Dead sinners under the power of the Spirit are awakened and converted to God—while careless and lukewarm Christians are quickened to increased zeal, and life, and spirituality.’

“ ‘This is all very plausible in theory,’ said G——, ‘but I think facts are entirely against the supposition that these stirs, or revivals as you call them, are produced by divine influence. I believe they are got up by human contrivance, and have about as much of the divine Spirit connected with their origin, as did the stir at Ephesus, when *they all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS.*’

“ ‘Again am I shocked!’ said the old man.

“ ‘Well, don’t you believe,’ responded G——, ‘that the Spirit of God is in all places, where there are moral and intelligent beings to be acted upon? Has not the Holy Spirit been always poured out just as much here as it now is?’

“ ‘The Spirit of God,’ replied Mr. J——, ‘is unquestionably operating more or less upon all minds in restraining them from sin, and exciting them to return to the path of holiness and life. I do not suppose that an excuse can be found for any sinner’s remaining impenitent for a single moment, or for any believer’s backsliding a single step, on the ground of God’s withholding his grace. I suppose that all men have grace enough to convert them, if they would be converted. But we know that this grace, in thousands of instances, does not convert men. And we know that in certain instances God does pour out his spirit more largely, and then sinners are converted. These are facts that we can’t get away from. Means are often employed for years to bring sinners to Christ, without effect: and yet when the Spirit of God is poured out in an increased measure, those means immediately become effectual. Why has not the truth that has been faithfully preached in this place for years taken effect till now? What power is it that within a few weeks has brought to the house of God, the drunkard, the gambler, the profane swearer, and the

The Pentecostal blessing.

Sabbath-breaker, who had not for years darkened the door of a Christian sanctuary till this revival commenced. What has led them to resolve to abandon for ever their vicious courses? What has led them to set up family prayer? You have no right to say that these men will turn back. Thousands converted in revivals are among the most consistent and exemplary Christians in the land. I must ask you to tell me, what cause has produced these effects. What power is it that has roused from the deep slumbers of carnal security the moralist, who has been leaning all his lifetime upon his good works? What power has opened his eyes, and shown him that all his righteousness is as filthy rags? There has been no new measures—no extra efforts. While we were criminal in our want of effort to promote the salvation of sinners, God has come among us and dispensed mercy like a Sovereign. And I might further ask: How, dear sir, do you account for the conversions that took place on the day of Pentecost? Why was not every sermon that Peter preached followed with the results that his sermon was on that occasion? What was that Pentecostal power which produced such astonishing results? I refer not to the power that was imparted to the apostles, but to that power that pervaded the minds of the people. There was no physical force exerted upon them. It was not the sound, nor the force of a mighty rushing wind that turned them; but God speaking to their hearts, through the truth of the word preached. It was this that was like fire, and like the hammer to the rock. It was this that *pricked them in their heart*, and caused them to say to Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Is it not most manifest from what we read in various parts of the Bible, and from what we see around us in the world, that God does, at certain times and places, pour out his Holy Spirit more largely than at others, and that for reasons to us inscrutable?"

"G—— had a better tact at warding off an argument by the power of ridicule, than of answering it by sound

The keen rebuke.

and logical reasoning. The manner of Mr. J—— had now become so solemn, that G—— shrunk from the use of his accustomed weapons, and replied in a tone of seriousness,

“‘I believe that *the Spirit of God is given to every man to profit withal*, and that it does not come in gusts like the fitful and inconstant wind, but is always present in the same measure.’

“‘Did not Jesus Christ,’ responded Mr. J——, ‘compare the Spirit’s influence, by which sinners are born again, to the wind? *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*’

“‘I understand by that passage,’ said G——, ‘quite another thing. My idea in relation to the Spirit’s influence is, that it is diffused like the presence of Jehovah through all space—that it is around us on every side, encompassing us like the atmosphere which we breathe.’

“‘Never shall I forget the appearance of Mr. J—— at this moment. He was of middling stature, and rather stout in his person. His hair was white, and his whole appearance truly venerable. His countenance at this moment was wrought up into an expression of tender compassion, and evident surprise, and holy horror. His bearing reminded me of what I should suppose might have been the appearance of some of the old prophets of Israel, when the message of the Lord they bore was treated with contempt, and the zeal which they felt for the honour of God burnt like a consuming fire within their bones. Slowly turning his head, and fixing his keen eye upon G—— with a steadiness of gaze that seemed to pierce him through and through, with a low emphatic tone he said,

“‘I marvel that one who believes that the Holy Spirit of God encompasses him every moment, like the atmosphere he breathes, should ever trifle—should ever fail to be serious and solemn! I marvel that such a one should not *set a watch before his mouth, and keep the door of his*

More positive divine influence in a given place at one time than another.

lips. My dear sir, let me ask you plainly, do you not believe that there is more positive divine influence in a given place at some times than at others ?

“ ‘ No,’ said G—— hastily and rather pettishly, for he had felt the rebuke he had just received.

“ Instantly Mr. J—— elevated his voice to a tone that seemed like thunder, and gave utterance, with a vehemence and impetuosity resembling the mountain torrent, to the emotions that were now roused within him, and were struggling to burst forth,—

“ ‘ A divinely commissioned minister of the Lord Jesus Christ—a man of prayer, and do not believe in the special influence of the Spirit—in any positive divine influence in one place more than another!!! Why does the inspired page say—*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near?* Don’t believe that God puts forth a stronger divine influence at one time than another! How does the sinner’s heart become changed? Let me tell you, you might just as well say that you did not know *whether there were any Holy Ghost.* (Acts xix. 2.) I should like to know how with your views you can use your own church service. How can you say to the people when about to bow down before the mercy-seat in the solemn act of prayer—“*The Lord be with you?*” What do you mean by that? And what do the people mean when they respond—“*And with thy spirit?*” What do you mean in that solemn invocation that follows—“*O God, make clean our hearts within us?*” Is it not the office of the Holy Spirit to cleanse and purify the heart? And if you do not take solemn words upon a thoughtless tongue, do you not mean to ask God at that very moment, to exert a cleansing act of divine power upon the affections of the soul? And if so, how does this harmonize with your theory? And what interpretation will you put upon the response of the people that immediately follows—“*And take not thy Holy Spirit from us?*” What do the people in saying this mean? Do they not mean, that it is possible

The doctrine of special divine influence taught in the Prayer Book.

that there may be less divine influence upon their soul than there now is. They who put up this petition understandingly and sincerely certainly must believe in a special divine influence. And is not this one of the doctrines of your church? Why do you pray in these words, *O Lord, raise up we pray thee thy power, and come among us?* And again, *We humbly beseech thee, that as, by thy special grace, preventing (or going before) us, thou dost put into our minds good desires; so by thy continual help, we may bring the same to good effect?* I have a Prayer Book which I often read, and it appears to me that your church acknowledges the doctrine of a special divine influence to the full extent; but I am afraid your ministers do not preach it.'

"Mr. J—— having paused for a moment, and G—— not appearing disposed to reply, he thus proceeded:

"My dear sir, I am an old man—I have had some experience in life, and though you may regard me as an enthusiastic Methodist, if you will but listen to me you may hear some things that will be useful to you. I have heard a great deal of preaching in my life, and have had the pleasure of listening to some of the first preachers of the age—but never have I seen or heard of any good done where the Spirit of God was not relied upon, as that which alone could impress the truth on the heart. Let me tell you, if you wish to do any good in the world, you must look to God for the special influences of his Spirit every time you attempt to preach. And if you will not be offended with me, I will also add, that in my humble opinion, the neglect of looking directly to God for the special influences of his Holy Spirit in your labours, is the grand reason why you, church ministers, see so few conversions among your people. When you preach, you do not expect that the Spirit of God will come down and convert the people. Your eye is not lifted up to the Eternal Throne in faith for this blessing; and the consequence is that, like Gideon's fleece, your congregations are all dry, while the dew of heaven

Dependence on the Holy Spirit in preaching.

falls everywhere around you. I say not this from any bad or hostile feelings, but in grief. My ancestors were members of the church of England. I love that old church, as she was in the days of her spirituality, when her prayers and homilies were written. O, sir, what a prayer that is which precedes the ten commandments, in the communion service—*Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit; that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord.* This is the kind of recognition of the work of the Spirit, which I very seldom hear from your preachers. If you will only follow the doctrines of your Prayer Book, and preach them, there would be a new state of things in your church.'

"All this was spoken with a manner so earnest, and solemn, and impassioned, that it seemed like a message from the Lord to me. How it affected G—— I know not. But for myself, as I rode along on my way home, I could think of nothing else but this conversation. I was led to ask myself—'Have I depended as I ought upon the Holy Spirit to affect the hearts of my hearers. I have often prayed that God would bless my sermons, but have I asked him to send down the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of my hearers, while I was proclaiming to them the message that I bore from Him?' And as I have proceeded in my sermon, have I preached as though I expected God would even then pour out his Holy Spirit upon those to whom I spoke? While I thus interrogated myself, my conscience upbraided me, and I felt that I had been leaning too much upon an arm of flesh—too much upon a well-written sermon—and that even when I asked God to bless my labours I had dishonoured him, by failing to expect the blessing I had asked for. As I rode along I endeavoured to confess my sins to God in relation to this matter, and determined ever after, in all my efforts to save sinners, to look solely

The rehearsal interrupted.

to the influences of the divine Spirit for success—yea, that the very next Sunday, as I stood by the valley of dry bones, and prophesied over them, I would say, with an earnest desire to understand and feel what I said,—*Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.*”

The rehearsal of my travelling companion was at this moment interrupted by our arrival at the place where we were to dine. He promised to continue the account of this conversation of Rev. Mr. H—— after we had again started on our way. The promise was redeemed. The sketch then given will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THE EFFECT OF PREACHING CHRIST.

What hath God wrought !

From the 23d of Numbers.

THE statement I gave you before dinner in relation to Mr. H——'s own account of the manner in which his mind was disabused of certain erroneous impressions that he was cherishing, which stood greatly in the way of his ministerial success, would be incomplete should I not proceed to mention one or two other particulars which he related. I cannot, however, refrain from remarking before I proceed to this rehearsal, that it is truly interesting and delightful to witness the power and efficacy of evangelical truth, when brought to bear directly and fully upon the human mind. Evangelical truth is not only adapted to affect the heart, just as a well constructed instrument is adapted to answer the end for which it was made—but it is so truly “the sword of the Spirit,” that whenever, and wherever, and by whomsoever it is preached, it becomes “the power of God unto salvation.” This view of the gospel cannot fail to deepen and strengthen our conviction of the divine origin of the Christian religion.

To see the simple, unembellished truths of the Bible, after learning, and eloquence, and powers of reasoning that seem allied to angelic intellect, have exerted and exhausted all their force in the effort ‘*to convert a sinner from the error of his way,*’ and accomplished nothing—to see the simple, unembellished truths of the Bible, proclaimed perhaps by the humblest and most obscure herald of the cross,

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The simplicity and power of the gospel.

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becoming, ‘the power of God unto salvation,’ awakening from the deep slumbers of spiritual death, and arousing to anxious solicitude about eternal things, those very minds which had remained uninfluenced and unmoved by all the gigantic powers of the most exalted human intellect, clothing its conceptions in language the most beautiful, and uttering its glowing sentiments in tones the most thrilling; surely this cannot fail to convince us, most conclusively, that there is a moral power and divine reality in the truths of the gospel. We have often witnessed instances of this kind; men of the most exalted talents, capable of presenting their thoughts in the most captivating form, and, in their utterance, of imparting to them all the charms and power of melody, have often laboured and laboured in the attempt to ‘*convert the sinner from the error of his way,*’ to no effect. It was not because they had not talents and eloquence that they were unsuccessful, but because they were not wielding the right weapons, *the plain, naked truths of the gospel.*

Every unconverted sinner, with all his acknowledgments of being what he should not be, is clad with ideas of his own excellence and righteousness, which, like an impervious coat of mail, can be pierced by no weapon, but ‘*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*’ It is the truths, the plain, unvarnished truths inscribed upon the pages of the New Testament, that become to the hearts of men ‘*sharper than any two-edged sword,*’ and ‘*mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds*’ of sin. As a matter of taste as well as of conscience, it behooves the minister of Christ, in his exhibitions of divine truth, to adhere to the simplicity of the gospel.

“I seek divine simplicity in him
 Who handles things divine; and all besides,
 Though learn’d with labour, and though much admired
 By curious eyes and judgments ill-inform’d,
 To me is odious.”

A rich and worldly-minded woman.

But I do wrong in attempting to interest you with my own reflections, when I might strike into a much richer vein of thought, by going back to the rehearsal of that conversation, some part of which I have already given you.

“A lady of considerable wealth and influence,” continued my much respected friend, Mr. H——, “was attached to the congregation. It often occurred to me, that if she was ardently pious, she had, in an eminent degree both the means and ability of being extensively useful. But nothing was more foreign to her than religious seriousness. She was the gayest among the gay, and excessively devoted to all the dissipations and fashionable amusements of the day.

“From the influence of education, she had formed an attachment to the Episcopal church, amounting almost to bigotry. She was always regular in her attendance upon public worship, uniform in her contributions to charitable purposes, and among the first to admire sermons that contained glowing and impassioned appeals to the heart, but yet an utter stranger to personal religion.

“It has ever been my study, in composing sermons, to delineate traits of character, to portray habits of thoughtlessness, and describe modes of evading the force of divine truth, from what I actually witnessed among my own people. Hence I never sit down to write a sermon without having some one, or a number of my people, particularly before my mind’s eye. The spiritual condition of Mrs. V—— (that was the name of this lady) was the subject of frequent and fearless delineation. But all my efforts to excite in her mind religious sensibility were fruitless and unavailing. If at any time a momentary impression was produced, it was as transient as the early dew or morning cloud. At the end of five years, Mrs. V——, though having attended upon my ministry during that period, was just the same vain, thoughtless, worldly-minded woman that she was before.

“When I began to have a more deep and consistent

view of the gospel scheme of salvation, I immediately altered my mode of preaching. It became my constant effort to exhibit in every sermon, and that in the plainest manner possible, these truths—that all mankind are under the curse of the law, and sentenced to eternal death—that there is no way of escape or deliverance but through Christ—that the grand requisition of the gospel, and that by which alone the soul can be brought into union with Christ, is *faith*—that this *faith* is the abandonment of all those props upon which we have hitherto leaned, and an exclusive reliance upon the crucified Son of God for justification and life—that this *faith* embraces Christ as our all, our best portion and richest inheritance, cordially acknowledges him in all his offices and characters, as our mediator, intercessor, and advocate, as our prophet, priest, and king; and that the reception of this *faith* into our minds will be the starting point or commencement of a new and holy life, the beginning of a great moral change in our inner man, and will constitute a new era in the history of our existence—that they who are conscious of no such inward change wrought in their hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit, who are as ardently attached to the perishing things of time as they ever were, and yield as readily to the low, corrupt, and debasing inclinations of their fleshly nature as they ever did, and pass the bleeding Saviour by with the same apathy and indifference that they always have, are most indisputably in an unrenewed state, and over them hangs the curse of God's violated and insulted law, which ere long will sink them beneath its tremendous weight into the abyss of unending wo.

“ Though deeply impressed with these solemn truths, and sincerely solicitous to make a lodgement of them in the hearts of my hearers, the first sermon of this peculiar character that I preached seemed to be a total failure, and entirely without effect. Countenances that used to beam with intelligence and interest when I was addressing my people, now exhibited a vacant wandering look, or symp-

Disappointment. God humbles us before he makes use of us for his glory.

toms of uneasiness, as though the subject was dull and unedifying.

“I must confess that I was exceedingly mortified, and humbled, and grieved at the result of this my first essay to preach what I now conceived to be the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. I went home, and flung myself upon my knees, and with many tears poured out my soul in prayer to God; and I here found comfort. Depend upon it, it is no disadvantage to a minister to be thus disappointed—to be thus humbled and brought low at the foot of the cross. God often works in a way and manner unknown to us; he may see fit to produce, through the instrumentality of his ministers, great good, no evidences of which are manifest to them.

“In my private meditation and reading of the word of God, I became more and more confirmed in the belief, that the views I had recently embraced were scriptural and true; and I resolved, as I was not preaching myself, but Christ, I would preach the truth, whether men would hear or forbear, whether it pleased or displeased them, leaving the result entirely to God.

“For a number of weeks I continued to preach with a cloud upon my soul, in ‘*great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart*,’ because the truth did not startle the impenitent from their guilty sleep; but my trust was in God, and I at length began to see the benefit of committing the whole matter to his disposal. I was preaching a sermon over which had been shed many tears, and written with many prayers. The congregation appeared unusually solemn. I was considering the sentence that would be finally pronounced upon the mere moralist. I had placed him before the judgment bar, and was listening to hear what claim, what plea he would urge in the face of that Judge, whom, as a bleeding Redeemer, he had rejected upon earth. My eye at this moment happened to rest upon the countenance of Mrs. V——; the big tear stood upon her cheek, and the whole expression of her features

The veil of self-deception torn off.

bespoke the existence of deep inward emotion and fixed trouble of soul. The sight to me was like dew to the parched ground. I could not but weep. The thought that God in his infinite mercy had begun to touch the hearts of my people, filled me with indescribable emotions. To many, I believe this was truly a solemn day—a day long to be remembered.

“Early on Monday morning I called upon Mrs. V——. She met me with great cordiality, but with a sedateness and seriousness of expression unusual to her. On all former occasions, when the subject of personal religion was introduced, she either remained silent, or sought to give to the conversation another turn; but now this seemed the only theme that could interest her.

“She at length said, ‘I wish you to tell me, sir, how I can be saved, for I feel that I am a lost sinner.’

“I inquired if she had never felt that till now?

“‘No,’ she replied, ‘I have always looked at myself through a false medium. The veil that concealed myself from my own view, has but recently been torn off.’

“On a subsequent occasion, I desired her to favour me with a short sketch of her religious exercises, and the means by which she was first brought to a right apprehension of her own character, and the way of salvation through Christ.

“‘From the time,’ said she, ‘that I began to reflect upon a state of future existence, which was at an early period, I determined to pursue such a course as would carry me to heaven. I thought I was pursuing that course. Never did I dream that I had not a valid claim to salvation. I fully believed if I did not commit any heinous sin, if I was charitable in giving to the poor, amiable in my temper, courteous in my manners, and regular in my attendance upon public worship, I should discharge my duty in such a way that I should certainly be saved. The gayeties and amusements of the world I thought harmless and innocent, and might be participated in without injury or guilt.

The means by which Mrs. V—— was enlightened.

“ ‘ While I heard from the pulpit threatenings addressed to *sinner*s, I supposed that the openly vicious were meant, and those threatenings therefore gave me no alarm. That I partook of the frailties common to my species, I was sensible ; that I was a sinner in this sense, I was conscious. But thinking it my misfortune, rather than my crime, I thrust from my mind all anxiety on this subject, with the idea *that God would not be strict to mark what was done amiss*.

“ ‘ With these views I remained for years perfectly at ease, indulging the pleasing but delusive hope that all was safe. The first thing that startled me from the deep slumbers in which I was reposing, was a sermon you preached upon the text, “ *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*” Some remarks in that discourse I shall never forget. You told us “ that there was not an individual present, however upright, however amiable, however virtuous, that was not so sinful and guilty as to deserve God’s everlasting wrath and damnation ; and if there was any one present that had any dependence upon his own goodness, and did not look as exclusively to Christ for salvation, as if he had never performed one good action, that individual would perish.”

“ ‘ These were new ideas to me ; I could not credit them. I certainly thought myself better off, and more sure of heaven than the worst of sinners. As far as my good actions go, I am sure they will save me. Such was my conclusion. Still I was uneasy. I began to read the Bible more attentively ; I began to reckon up at the close of each day my good deeds, to see if I had not enough to balance those I knew to be wrong. The more I read, and the more I examined myself, the more uneasy I became ; I began to doubt whether I did any good thing. Another sermon that you preached, placed before me my sins in such a light, that I gave up myself as lost, and was on the very borders of despair. O how beautiful, how transcendently glorious did Christ then appear, when revealed to me !

The testimony of a plain Christian man.

'Then I was deeply and perfectly convinced that if he had been any other Saviour than an entire and altogether Saviour—that if I was not saved in the same way that the vilest sinner would be, I should infallibly perish.'

" 'This is a brief sketch of the account she gave of the manner in which she was first aroused to a sense of her condition. This, thought I, is a lesson intended to teach me to do my duty, and not be discouraged, though I see no immediate results. The very sermon to which she referred her first serious impression was the one which gave me so much uneasiness, because it was heard with so little interest. I was now more fully determined to know nothing among my people, 'save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'

" 'Another occurrence about this time encouraged me to go on and strive to preach Christ faithfully. One of my parishioners with whom I had previously had but slight acquaintance, called one Monday evening to see me. I was a little surprised at it, for he had usually seemed disposed to keep out of my way. He was an Englishman, in moderate circumstances, and advanced considerably beyond the meridian of life. He was a communicant in the church, and from all that I could learn, a very consistent and exemplary Christian, though somewhat eccentric. On the present occasion he seemed unusually affable, and soon adverted to the sermons on the preceding Sunday. After expressing his satisfaction in listening to the truth they contained, he said rather abruptly,—

" 'Are you conscious that your style of preaching has changed within a few months?'

" 'In what respect?' said I.

" 'In every respect,' said he.

" 'Ah—do you think so?'

" 'I know so!—why, sir, you now begin to preach like a converted man—like one who has himself stood at the cross of Christ. In preaching there is nothing like experience. When we have been there ourselves, we know

Rev. Mr. Berridge.

how to show others the way. I hope your future course will be like good old Mr. Berridge's.'

“ ‘What was his course?’

“ ‘Why, sir, he was a wonderful man. The Lord seemed to bless him so that, wherever he went, souls were immediately converted. When he entered the ministry it was very different. He began his labours at Stapleford, near Cambridge. He supposed that he was a converted man, for even when he was very young he had deep convictions of sin. He was a serious and solemn preacher, and had great zeal, and persevered in his duties with faithfulness. But no success seemed to attend his labours. After some six or seven years he was appointed vicar of Everton. He removed to that place; but he did not seem to succeed any better there. And what was the reason? He had no clear views of the gospel. He knew as yet experimentally very little about the way of salvation. He was a stranger to that evangelical faith which works by love and purifies the heart, and makes Christ all and in all. He had been all along preaching up the righteousness of the creature, instead of the merits and righteousness of Christ, for acceptance before God. After he had been at Everton a few years, it pleased the Lord to open his eyes, and show him his own condition as a sinner. He now saw that he had been like a blind man leading the blind. There was now revealed to him such a view of his own sinfulness, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that he was almost ready to despair of mercy. He cast away with loathing his own righteousness, and fell down at the foot of the cross as a guilty perishing sinner. God graciously looked upon him and bade him live. His eye was now fixed on the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He went forth and began to preach Christ. What was the result? Souls were immediately added to his ministry. The young and the old came to inquire, *what they must do to be saved*. Several talented young men were numbered among these early converts, who entered the

The effect of faithful preaching.

ministry. One of them was the Rev. Mr. Hicks, who afterwards became his assistant, and whose labours God greatly blessed. Mr. Berridge, as soon as the light broke in fully upon his mind, felt it his duty to go about and preach Christ everywhere, where the people would hear him. He did not confine his labours to his own parish, but made frequent tours through the counties of Bedford, Cambridge, Essex, Hertford, and Huntingdon, exhorting men to flee from the wrath to come. The very first year after he commenced these labours, making Christ and him crucified all his theme, he conversed with more than a thousand persons who had been brought under serious impressions through his ministry. And during one year of his ministry, it was ascertained that not less than four thousand persons were awakened to a sense of their condition as ruined sinners, under his and Mr. Hicks's sermons. He went on in this track of usefulness for twenty years before he was called home. It was nearly at the end of his course, that he came into my native parish, and preached one evening. I had always attended the parish church. I had been baptized and confirmed, and had also taken the sacrament, and thought I was a good Christian. Though I was not openly immoral, I had no more idea of heartfelt religion than a heathen. Drawn out by curiosity to hear one preach, of whom so much was said, I heard words from the lips of Mr. Berridge that evening that I could not forget. He tore up all my old foundation. Though I resisted the convictions of my own mind a long time, I was obliged at last to flee to Christ as my only refuge. Then I saw every thing in a new light. Old things had passed away, and all things had become new. And now, sir, I hope your course, as I said, will be like that of good Mr. Berridge.'

“This conversation confirmed my determination to preach Christ and him crucified. I could now plainly see why this old Englishman had not been drawn towards me. I thanked the Lord for this new testimony, that my preaching was more in accordance with the Bible, and resolved that

The church.

whether men would hear or forbear I would go on, and fearlessly proclaim the truth. The effect was soon manifest. In less than three months from this time I administered the Holy Supper to more than forty new communicants, who gave every evidence of genuine conversion. How lovely did the church of Christ then appear—an ark into which precious souls were gathered, over whom were spread the outstretched wings of covenanted mercy !”

Another of those conversations this moment occurs to me, in which several important points were brought up to view.

The conversation above adverted to, with the circumstances accompanying its rehearsal, will be found in the next chapter.

A moonlight scene.

CHAPTER IV.

PROFITABLE DISCUSSION.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

From the 27th chapter of Proverbs.

THE conversation to which I alluded occurred under very peculiar circumstances. Mr. H——, myself, and another clergyman had taken a ride to visit a spring of some notoriety, that was strongly impregnated with sulphur. On our way our carriage broke down, and in getting it repaired we were detained till after nightfall. The evening, however, was so beautiful, and the return ride so pleasant, that we could none of us regret the detention. It was just about as late in the season as it now is, and I do not know that I can give you a better idea of the scene and circumstances, than by using the language of one whose poetic numbers I have often read with peculiar delight—

“It was an eve of autumn’s holiest mood,
The corn-fields, bathed in Cynthia’s silver light,
Stood ready for the reaper’s gathering hand ;
And all the winds slept soundly. Nature seem’d,
In silent contemplation, to adore
Its Maker. Now and then, the aged leaf
Fell from its fellows, rustling to the ground ;
And, as it fell, bade man think on his end.
On vale and lake, on wood and mountain high,
With pensive wing outspread, sat heavenly thought,
Conversing with itself. Vesper look’d forth,
From out her western hermitage, and smiled ;
And up the East, unclouded, rode the moon
With all her stars, gazing on earth intense,
As if she saw some wonder walking there :
Such was the night, so lovely, still, serene.”

The sacred ministry approached from improper motives.

Our ride occupied all of two hours, which was principally spent in delightful and animated conversation. Some remarks that had been dropped, led Mr. H—— to comment upon the character and deportment of theological students.

“There is nothing,” said he, “that distresses me so much as to see a young man coming forward in preparation for the ministry, with low and inadequate views of the awful responsibility which that sacred office imposes. But to see a young man whose mind is inflated with vanity—who is disposed to be constantly involved in some romantic adventure of love—whose whole conduct is marked with levity—a mere flippant coxcomb—who appears to be in his proper element only when in the midst of fashion and gayety, and has no relish for the society of the serious and the grave—to see such a young man stretching out his hands to *bear the vessels of the sanctuary*, is shocking beyond degree! And yet young men of this very stamp do find their way into the ministry.

“Some seem to view the sacred office merely as a post of honour, conferring distinction upon the man who holds it, and opening the way of agreeable access to the most respectable portion of community. Others seem to enter the ministry because they are fond of literary pursuits, and wish to enjoy a life of literary ease, released from all care in relation to the means of their subsistence. Others again seem honestly to desire to do all the good they can in the world, and though they have no clear views of the doctrines of the cross, or of the worth of the undying soul, aspire to the sacred office from a sort of undefined philanthropic feeling.

“When we think how many enter the ministry from these and similar views—and how many that put on the sacerdotal robes deceive themselves, and have never been in truth ‘moved by the Holy Ghost’ to enter upon this high and sacred embassy, it is not at all wonderful that we see around us in so many instances such sad failure of ministerial success. O that our young men would think how

Reasons why some ministers do not find fields of labour.

awful a matter it is to stand before God and perjure themselves in the very act of receiving their external commission—that they would consider that without they are ‘moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them this office,’ they cannot but be a blight and mildew, laying waste the fair heritage of the Lord wherever they are cast—that they would consider the confusion and shame that will cover them in the tremendous day of final reckoning, when they stand before God to be judged!

“The true and only reason why some *ministers* so long remain without a cure, is that they have never been moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the sacred office. Do you think that Paul, or Stephen, or Philip, or Peter, or John, would have set down for a year or two without a people to preach to? The reason why some ministers do not obtain places, is that they have entered the ministry, not for the sole object of turning sinners from the pathway of perdition, but to get a comfortable and eligible situation. If a man is willing to spend and be spent for Christ, if he is willing to deny himself and be poor and despised, that undying souls may be rescued from perdition and God glorified—he never will want a field of labour. And if he is not willing to do this, if he is not willing to be any thing or nothing, just as Christ shall see fit to fix his allotment, he certainly can never have been moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon him the sacred office. We know that there are all around us fields of moral destitution, where we have good reason to believe labour would not be bestowed in vain. But when these fields are pointed out to one of your non-officiating clergymen, he instantly objects because the salary is so small, or so uncertain. Rather than submit to this inconvenience, he prefers to remain idle. Did ever a man, upon whom ‘*necessity was laid*’ to preach the gospel, act thus? O where would the church have been—where would Christianity have been, if the first heralds of the cross had acted in this way? Paul was willing to encounter stripes

Christ the corner-stone.

and imprisonment, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, and death itself, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to a dying world. And why? Because he was moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him the office of an ambassador for Christ. And I would ask, are there any who go forth in the spirit of Paul that have any trouble in finding fields of labour, or the means of subsistence?"

The clergyman who was in the carriage with us, here remarked,

"But, Mr. H——, there are some clergymen that obtain places, and seem to wish to preach all the doctrines of the Bible faithfully, that still see little or no fruits resulting from their labour—what do you ascribe this to?"

"It becomes me to speak on this topic with great diffidence. But I will tell you one thing. I never did any good in the ministry till I began to *preach Christ as all in all*. My sermons now are only some miserable thoughts put together in a very imperfect way about the love of God, the sufficiency of Jesus, and the work of the Spirit. But even these God has blessed. The minister must preach but one doctrine, or rather all the doctrines he preaches must rise out of this one—*Christ and him crucified*. Jesus Christ is the foundation, the corner-stone, the way, the truth, the life, the hope, the refuge, the bread of life, the consolation of Israel."

"But," said the former interrogator, "the persons to whom I refer give great prominence and distinctness in their sermons, to the doctrine of salvation alone through Christ."

"There is a glaring defect," responded Mr. H——, "in the preaching of some ministers in relation to discriminativeness. They preach in such a way that all their hearers, unless they are guilty of some very gross immorality, are led to think themselves very good Christians. The Bible every where speaks of men as *converted or unconverted, penitent or impenitent, justified or condemned*.

Discriminative preaching.

There are undoubtedly these two classes in every audience. And if the preacher does not keep his hearers apprized of this, and make them feel that they belong to one or other of these classes, and put them upon the business of deciding where they stand—his preaching will be of no account. Sermons defective in this particular have often led the impenitent to be soothed and self-satisfied with those scriptural promises and encouragements which belong only to those who have been truly born again. I cannot conceive of a more certain way to lull men to sleep, and spread over them a fatal delusion, than such a style of preaching as this. The line of demarcation between the people of God and those who are in an unconverted state, should always be drawn, and drawn with such breadth and distinctness, that every one will be constrained to see on which side he stands, and therefore to understand what part of the sermon belongs to him."

This conversation was continued, and as it proceeded, the speakers seemed to gather fresh inspiration from the lovely night-scene around them. But I must hasten to tell you of a conversation in relation to *parochial visiting*. Often, after having spent a few hours with Mr. H——, and witnessed the easy, natural, and delightful manner in which he engaged every individual about him in conversation upon personal religion, I have asked myself, Why is it that Christian people, and Christian ministers, so seldom converse upon a subject so noble, so glorious, so infinitely interesting?

The conversation to which I just alluded, took its rise from the following occurrence. A small party were dining with Mr. H——; the whole company consisting only of two clergymen, two theological students, and three ladies—unless we add the name of Henry H——, Mr. H——'s son, a bright-looking boy, about eight years old, who sat by the side of his mother.

Upon our first sitting down to the table, there was that

The child's answer.How souls are won.

easy and unconstrained manner in our host, that put to flight every thing like reserve or embarrassment, and insensibly drew us into conversation.

The conversation was at first of a desultory character, but at length a subject was started that seemed to attract the attention of all, and one of the visiting clergymen, the Rev. Mr. Z——, became highly animated in the discussion.

The subject discussed was the character of some one of the ancients. His wisdom had been called into question. Mr. Z——, in the ardour of feeling, inquired, "If he was not a wise man, *who is wise—yes, who is wise?*"

The earnestness with which this inquiry was made occasioned a momentary silence through the whole company. Henry, seizing the opportunity, whispered to his mother, "I can answer that question."

"Hush!" said his mother.

"*Let him speak,*" said one of the ladies, who overheard what he had whispered to his mother.

"What remark have you to offer, my son?" said his father affectionately, who had taken very little part in the previous conversation.

Henry's countenance brightened up with intelligence, and with a trembling voice he said, "I can answer Mr. Z——'s question, for I was reading it this morning in the Bible."

"Well, let us have the answer," replied his father.

"*He that winneth souls is wise.*"

"A very good answer," replied his father, "and I hope you will hereafter understand and exemplify its meaning."

This was the commencement of a very interesting and profitable conversation. The several means by which souls might be won were made the subject of copious remark.

At length Mr. H—— observed, "That although none could hold in higher estimation the pulpit than he did, yet he was decidedly of the opinion, that more good could be done by religious conversation in the private circle—by thus '*preaching from house to house*'—than by public preach-

Parochial visiting.

ing in the sanctuary." It was a testimony borne in reference to the apostles, that *in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*

"But," said Mr. Z——, "there are a number of serious objections to this plan."

The Rev. Mr. Z——, though an amiable, and, in many points, a truly estimable man, had not those deep views of religion, nor that conscientious concern about the faithful discharge of his duty, which characterized Mr. H——. He was naturally of an easy disposition, and quickly deterred from any course where he perceived difficulties were to be encountered. He had hitherto scarcely attempted a course of parochial visiting, and perhaps the remark of Mr. H——, though unintended, came to him as a sort of reproof.

"There are a number of serious objections to this plan," said he.

"What are those objections?" inquired Mr. H——.

"First," said Mr. Z—— "it would be too great a tax upon our time."

"Ah!" replied Mr. H——, "have we not consecrated all our time to God? and are we not therefore bound to spend it in such a way as will tend most to promote his glory and the salvation of our fellow men? But really to attain this object, I do not think it necessary to infringe upon any portion of that time now appropriated to duties strictly professional. We may read and write, and preach and pray as much as we now do, and yet have abundant time to see all our people, and speak to them in private about their eternal salvation. How many hours, my dear brother, do we spend in receiving and paying mere worldly visits! How many hours do we spend in pursuits totally unconnected with the objects of our ministry! O, sir, if we carefully husbanded this time, and employed it, as the blessed Saviour did his life, '*in going about doing good,*' I think your objection would have no validity, and we should find, to our inexpressible delight, in the day when

No insuperable obstacles in the way of a faithful performance of this duty.

Christ gathers together his elect, many additional gems in our crown of rejoicing."

"Even though we had abundant time," said Mr. Z——, re-enforcing his objection, "there are many individuals and families in our congregations, to whom we could not speak directly, upon the subject of personal religion, without giving offence, or at least without losing a portion of our influence with them, and rendering our visits at their houses less acceptable."

"Is there not in this argument," replied Mr. H—— with increasing animation, "is there not something of that '*fear of man which bringeth a snare?*' I take it as a given and indisputable principle, that when our duty is made plain to us, there is but one course for us to pursue—we must do our duty, let the consequences be what they may. When God says to the wicked, '*O wicked man, thou shalt surely die,*' we must '*warn the wicked from his way,*' however much offence it may give, else '*his blood will be required at our hands.*' And of what value, my dear sir, is that influence with our parishioners, which we lose the moment that we attempt to bring them to Christ? I think, however, that this is a mistaken view of the subject. Faithful admonition in the private circle, when it comes from a heart full of love and kindness, will not give offence. It will elevate the man of God who thus discharges his duty, in the estimation of those very persons who perhaps feel pained by his admonition. He may not be hailed with as much welcome in the circles of gaiety; he may not be invited to those parties of pleasure where his presence would have been earnestly solicited, had he been less faithful; but in the hour of affliction, when sober reason is on the throne, and the judgment is allowed its legitimate reign, he, of all others, will be most earnestly sought. Yes, those very persons, who, while dancing the giddy and intoxicating rounds of pleasure, might have thought his godly admonitions impertinent and obtrusive, will, when stretched upon the bed of sickness,

An illustration.

desire him before all spiritual counsellors. I recollect an instance perfectly in point. Some years ago, I resided in L——. There was a very gay young man there, of immense fortune, who was a sort of patron to the place. There were two clergymen in the neighbourhood. The one a plain but faithful man. His congregation consisted of the lower and more ignorant class of people. He did his duty to all, and to this gay and wealthy young man he frequently spoke with all the plainness and faithfulness of the ancient prophets, though perhaps not always with the same prudence. The society of this faithful minister, of course, was not much sought: he was often spoken of as a sour, disagreeable Puritan. The other minister had more learning and refinement, and a more fashionable congregation. His society was much sought by this gay young man, and they at length became almost inseparable companions. This minister, though he often witnessed in his young friend immoralities plainly forbidden by the Bible, never presumed to reprove him; he therefore retained his attachment and esteem until he was suddenly seized with a sickness which proved fatal. Being fully impressed with the conviction that he should never recover, he began to think about meeting the Judge Eternal, and the agony of mind he now experienced no one can conceive. His friends proposed to send for the minister who had for so many years enjoyed his intimacy. ‘*No, no,*’ said the dying man, ‘*he can do me no good.*’ He has feared to tell me my duty when in health, and I can have no confidence in his advice and instruction now. Send, send for that despised man of God, who has not been deterred, by fear or favour, from warning me through life, and apprizing me of my real character.’ ”

“But,” said Mr. Z——, still starting objections, “we should often find it impossible to introduce religious conversation, without the greatest abruptness and apparent incivility.”

“If we are at all disinclined to our duty,” responded Mr. H——, “nothing is easier than to discover, or imagine,

Duty belongs to us—consequences must be left with God.

innumerable difficulties in our path. And on the other hand, if we are fully bent upon the discharge of our duty, nothing is more certain than that Divine Providence will devise means for the removal of *every* obstacle. On those trying occasions, when obedience to divine command involves us in apparent peril, we have only to keep on in the straightforward path, and look continually to God for support and success. Thus when the Israelites were brought into such straits at the Red Sea—hedged in, on either side, by impassable mountains—cut off from a retreat by the advancing and irresistible war-chariots of Egypt—and having before them the waters of the great deep—the Israelites, when brought into these straits, had really no reason to fear: for they had come there in obedience to the command of God. He had marked out their path, and fixed their stations; and he was able, and knew how, to deliver them. His command on this occasion was—*Speak unto the people, that they go forward*. What! into the overwhelming waters of the sea? How many objections might have been started, how many arguments urged, to show the impossibility of obedience in this instance! Still the command was explicit and peremptory. Was there any thing unjust in it? Did God require them to divide the sea, or plunge into its overwhelming waters? No. This was his business. All they had to do was, to believe and obey—to trust in Him, and *go forward*. And just so it is with us, in reference to our duty. Whatever difficulties or discouragements lie in our path, we must *go forward*—it is God that commands; and if we have confidence in him, if we have faith in the all-controlling power of his Providence, we shall not fear *‘though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.’*

“Had we sufficient confidence, my dear sir, in the cause we have espoused, and solemnly undertaken to advocate—were we sufficiently impressed with the priceless worth of immortal souls—those difficulties which you imagine, I

The ambassador.

think, would vanish, like the mountain mist before the risen sun.

“ You call upon a family, and have just been made acquainted with a piece of intelligence in which their highest temporal interest is involved. Now, if the turn which the conversation takes does not furnish you with a fit opportunity to introduce this subject, you will not on this account be deterred from making the communication : you would act upon the principle, that the importance of the intelligence, and the interest it would excite, would furnish abundant apology for any abruptness in the manner of its introduction. And shall we not, my brother, feel equal confidence in the message we have to communicate ?

“ Again. He who is sent to a foreign court upon an important embassy does not rest satisfied, or deem his duty discharged, if, when admitted into the presence of those with whom he has to negotiate, he finds no opportunity of speaking upon the great object of his mission. No. He goes again and again, and seeks another and another occasion, until the matter is brought up, and he has obtained a definite, decisive, and final answer, from those with whom he was sent to negotiate.

“ Now, if the ambassadors of Christ, in their round of parochial visiting, had before them an object as definite, and were as persevering, and as fully bent upon attaining that object, I think they would find no lack of opportunity to speak to men about their immortal interests.”

“ But do you indeed find no difficulty in introducing religious conversation in the families you visit ?” inquired Mr. Z——.

“ As you have appealed so directly to my personal experience, you will not ascribe it to the promptings of vanity or egotism, if I give you some account of myself in relation to this matter.

“ The first years of my ministry were years of much ignorance and error ; along with clouded and obscure views of the plan of salvation, I had no adequate idea of the

Testimony of a ruined people against their pastor.

awful responsibilities I had assumed in taking upon me the office of an ambassador of Christ. After my eyes, through divine grace, were opened to a clearer perception of the truth as it is in Jesus, I began to estimate more fully the extent of the responsibility resting upon me. In reading over the office for '*the ordering of priests*,' I became very deeply impressed with a sense of my own delinquencies. Many parts of the exhortation addressed to the candidates now appeared to me in an entirely new light.

"It was indeed a sacred character, an awful responsibility, that I had taken upon myself—'*a messenger, watchman, and steward of the Lord*'—appointed 'to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.'

"I was led to ask myself, Have I heeded the admonition—'See that ye never cease your labour, your care and diligence, *until ye have done all that lieth in you*, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are, or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ—that there be no place left among you for error in religion, or for viciousness in life?' This inquiry startled me. The thought flashed across my mind, that if God should at once call me and my flock to his bar, many would stand up in judgment, and say, 'O, if religion had ever been brought to our firesides and our homes—if our minister had ever spoken to us plainly and directly about our immortal interests in private, this curse would not have lit upon us—we might have entered yonder heaven, and escaped that awful burning gulf into which we are now doomed to sink! O had our minister been faithful, we should not have stood here this hour, covered with confusion! It is true, he was kind and amiable; he told us our duty in the sanctuary—but this was so much a matter of course, it made but a momentary impression upon our

Preparation for parochial visiting.

minds. He often mingled in the private circle, enlivening it by his sociability and extensive fund of information ; but at such times he never spoke of Christ or salvation ; he never said, *Sir, unless you repent and turn to God, you will be lost.* Had I been called away that hour, I am confident many would have thus testified against me. But, through divine grace, I was spared. I resolved to pursue a new course—to commence a round of parochial visiting upon a new plan. I recollect well the first day that I attempted to carry this proposed plan into execution. I rose early, and spent several hours in meditation and prayer. I reflected deeply upon the inconceivable worth of an immortal soul—a soul which could be ransomed by nothing but the blood of the Son of God—a soul, whose agony, whose torment, whose perdition, if lost, were beyond the power of calculation. All the souls of this parish, thought I, are committed to my charge. I can never have done ‘*all that lieth in me*’ to save them, until I warn them personally, and in private. If I fail to do this they may be eternally lost. God has placed me a *watchman* over them ; he has sent me a *messenger* to them ; if I am not faithful, their blood will be upon my soul.

“I endeavoured to realize, that this might be the last tour of visiting that I should ever make through the parish, that as soon as I had completed this round of parochial calls, God might summon me to his presence, to give an account of my stewardship. I will endeavour, thought I, to do my work as if I was doing it for the last time. I will go into no house without the solemn impression upon my mind, I may never be permitted to speak to these people again about their souls : if I am not now faithful, under what circumstances shall we meet at the judgment bar ? And finally, I made it a subject of devout and fervent prayer to Almighty God, that he would prepare the way, and enable me to discharge my duty with fidelity. The families I was about to visit were particularly remembered before his throne, and their salvation most earnestly besought.

“To this practice I have ever since adhered, deeming previous preparation as essential to profitable visiting as to profitable preaching; and I have no doubt, if it were universally adopted, a thousand of the difficulties now complained of would vanish. I found it so in my case. I was astonished to find how easy it was to speak to my people about their salvation; and still more astonished, to see with what interest and respect they listened to my words. They perceived I was in earnest to secure their salvation, and this drew still closer the ties of affection between us.

“When I had once completed such a tour of visiting, the way was quite clear. They then expected, when I entered their dwelling, that I should not leave it without dropping a word for Christ; and they always evinced disappointment if I did. I fully believe that this is the most powerful means that can be employed to win souls to Christ. As far as my own experience is concerned, I can say most unqualifiedly, that this method of parochial visiting has been attended with the happiest results, both in reference to my people and to myself.

“The advantages to *my flock* were manifold. Plain and direct conversations were, in several instances, the means of awakening careless and worldly-minded persons to deep and abiding seriousness. Some who had long been desirous of counsel in relation to eternal things were drawn out into an acknowledgment of their religious exercises, and thus the more speedily confirmed in a Christian course. The views and spiritual wants of others, upon whom, at the time, no impression was apparently made, were ascertained; and thus most valuable information was acquired—to wit, *the knowledge how to touch deep and secret chords that would vibrate to the inmost soul*. All my people became much more attentive listeners, and much more easily affected by divine truth, in the house of God. They no longer supposed that the exhortations from the pulpit were addressed exclusively to others, but understood, from what had been said to them in private, that

Conclusion.

they were individually, with me, objects of deep solicitude. To *myself* these strictly parochial visits were of incalculable advantage. I was every day finding new materials for my sermons, and never at a loss what subjects to select. In the ardent piety of some of my flock, I always found much to incite me to seek new supplies of divine grace; and in endeavouring to rouse others from their torpor, I often found the animating subjects to which I recurred, kindled a new fire in my own heart; and even when I failed altogether—when my counsel was repelled, (which did not frequently occur)—even this, inasmuch as it humbled me, and taught me that all the power comes from God, was of service to me.

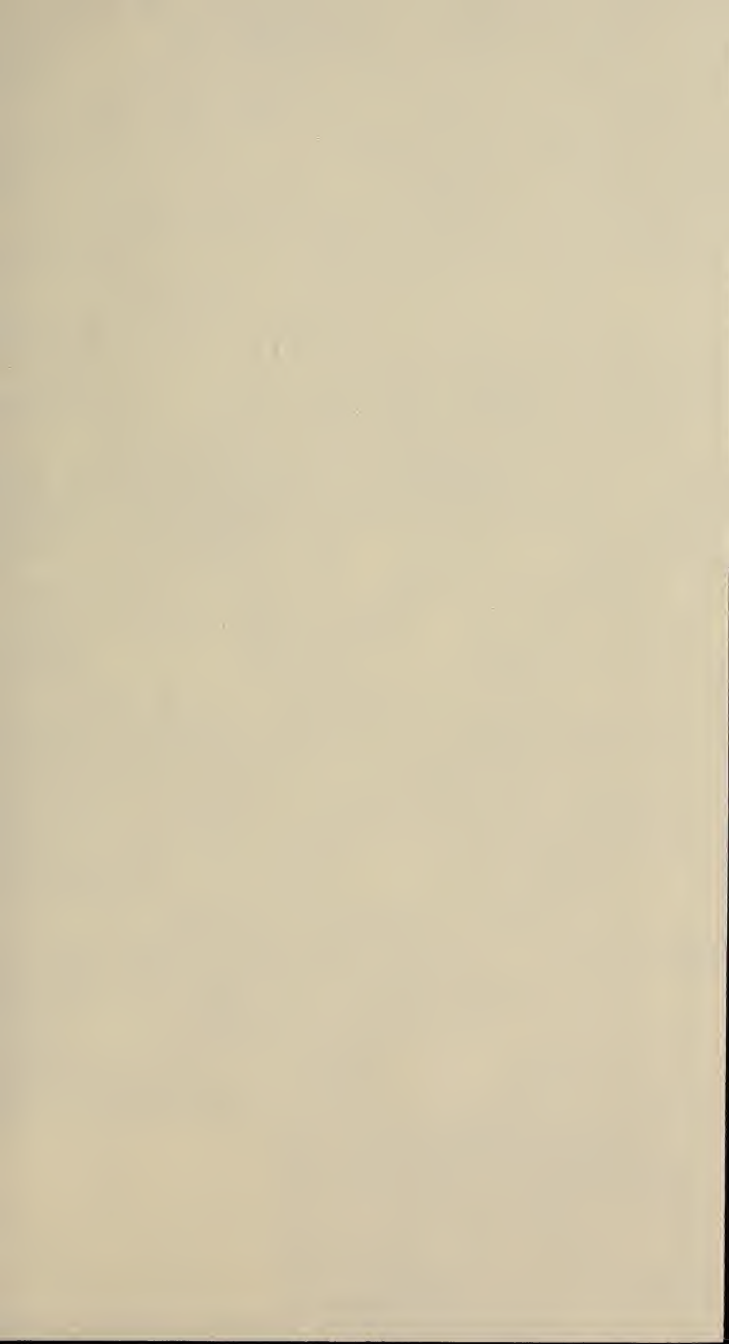
“But I have already engrossed the conversation too long. I have only one more remark to add on this subject, and that is, that I sincerely wish that every minister of our church would make it a rule from which he *would* never depart, to read the office for ‘*the ordering of priests*,’ as the first business, every Monday morning. I am sure that all would then feel constrained to pursue the course of parochial visiting which I have adopted.”

I have thus given you some faint idea of the character of one whose full and complete RECORD IS ON HIGH. When we reach that blessed world, where he is now happy with God, and you behold that record spread out before the throne, you will be convinced that I have not coloured the picture that I have attempted to draw.

Though I have very imperfectly set down the sketch with which my travelling companion entertained me, I hope that some ideas have been retained, that will suggest in the reader’s mind profitable trains of reflection.

THE END.

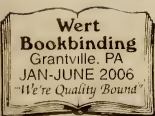




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